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LETTERS AND DISCOURSES

OF

CELIO CURIO.



ITALY AND THE GOSPEL.

LETTERS AND DISCOURSES
OF
CELIO CURIO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN EDITION OF 1552.

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

ALSO,

A SERMON BY DR. DESANCTIS,
LATE PRIEST OF THE PARISH OF SANTA MARIA MADALENA,
AT ROME.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS-STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following pages are translated from a work of Celio Curio, of the sixteenth century, bearing the title of "Four Christian Letters, with a Paradox upon the Text, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' and a Discourse or Sermon on Prayer, and one on Justification, newly brought to light for the Consolation and Confirmation of Pious Persons and Lovers of the Truth.

" ' Rejoice in the Lord alway : and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.' (Phil. iv. 4, 5.)

"In Bologna per M. Pietro and Paulo Perusini fratelli nel 1552."

The letters and sermons of this remarkable man, now presented to the English reader,

are those of the volume that seemed most calculated to afford a specimen of his lively and affectionate manner of commending that Gospel to others which had wrought so happy a change on his own mind. It was eminently characteristic of the progress of the Reformed principles in Italy that they brought under their influence men of distinguished talents and great literary acquirements. Among these, the accomplished scholar Celio Curio held no inferior rank. The sketch of his life prefixed to this volume will be read with additional interest as translated from a modern Italian Journal, where it was placed for the benefit of his countrymen, and his former coadjutors in the priesthood, by the Rev. Dr. Desanctis, a convert from the same Church, and whose conversion witnesses a similar instance of the power of the truth of the Gospel in the present day. There are, indeed, several points of resemblance in the two cases, he being also, like the subject of his biographical sketch, a man of cultivated mind

and occupying a prominent station,* was obliged to quit his native land ; and from the sensation which his conversion to the Protestant faith has made in the very centre of the Roman Catholic Church, efforts from the highest quarters have not been wanting to induce him to return. He, however, like his predecessor, seems only intent on making known the Gospel to his benighted country ; and the light and unction which mark a sermon from his ordinary ministrations, which will be found appended to those of Celio Curio, convey the strongest conviction that all such efforts will be unavailing.

There appears to be, both in the early age of the Reformation, and in the present day, a striking difference between the experience of those who have been brought from the darkness of Romanism to the light of the Gospel, and that of the convert from Protestantism to the Roman Catholic faith. In the latter case there is very seldom any dis-

* Priest of the parish of Santa Maria Madalena at Rome.

tinct and precise statement given of the workings of his mind that led to the change, or of his new and happy experience as the result of it ; seldom any intelligent profession of faith dwelt upon and commended to others as bringing peace and consolation ; seldom any outpouring of the heart in grateful praise to God for the marvellous work of his grace. On the contrary, all is silent as the cloister, and we might almost be tempted to think that the passage had been from the cheerful light of day to the darkness of the prison house. He, on the other hand, who has escaped from the trammels of Romanism, loves to retrace the steps of his happy change—to tell how his eyes, so long bandaged with error, began to rejoice in the light of the sun—to tell of that peace and joy which he has found in believing a Saviour's love, and in resting on the favour of a reconciled God and Father ; he loves too, to win others to come and partake of the same blessings, and can add to the warrant of Scripture the testimony of his own intimate experience, that there is a truth and reality in

that satisfying portion which the faithful and simple reception of the Gospel confers.

In attempting to account for this difference, may it not be justly inferred that Romanism, dealing chiefly in external observances, and placing the intervention of men and things between God and the soul, does not meet the necessities of an awakened conscience, and cannot respond to that "hungering and thirsting after God," which the Psalmist so often brings before us as the experience of a soul burdened and broken under a sense of sin, and earnestly seeking deliverance both from its guilt and power? It is this travail of the soul, this long-continued and ineffectual search after a remedy sufficient for the depth of his disease, that so often makes a genuine convert from Romanism so interesting and pious a Christian, and renders his history edifying to others. This feature will be recognised in Celio Curio; and the depth of his convictions of the evil and deception and insufficiency of Romanism, and the affectionate zeal with which he warns those who were exposed to its insidious influ-

ence, or in danger of being drawn back again to its delusions, will be a useful lesson to us in these days of indifference.

At a time, too, when the Roman Catholic Church is putting forth her power and pretensions with renewed, and even with unwonted energy, and is directing her efforts of proselytism in a particular manner to this country and our colonial dependencies and the fields of our missionary labour, it may be useful to recall those solid triumphs of the Gospel which have been achieved of old in the very centre of her camp. The remembrance of them may again direct attention to Italy, and remind us that even the strongholds and dark fastnesses of Rome itself are not impenetrable to its light. The political circumstances of that country, and the spirit of inquiry that has for some time prevailed amongst its priesthood and caused many of them to cast off the yoke, are encouragements to hope that God may yet cause that cry to be heard in her streets, "Come out of her, my people." We as a nation possessing the truth, have

hitherto been sadly unfaithful to our trust ; and ever since the Continent has been open to British travellers, and Rome has been a chief point of attraction, the influence that has been exerted has been all in an opposite direction. Through the seduction of the fine arts, and all the meretricious appurtenances of her idolatrous worship, many souls have been ensnared ; and though their conversion has merely been from the nominal profession of one form of religion to that of another, yet the injurious effects of this influence have been deplorable in deadening the conscience, and weakening the discernment of the paramount authority of Scripture.

The enlightened members of the Christian community in Geneva have had frequent occasion to note the operation of the influence of a winter's residence at Rome on many of the aristocratic families of England who pass through their city in going and returning ; and their observation is a melancholy proof of the gradual manner in which familiarity with evil, that in the first instance excited

abhorrence, may eventually do its work. On the return from a first visit this abhorrence is strongly expressed ; from a second or third, excuses and palliations take its place, the distinction between Divine and human authority is lost, piety of demeanour is confounded with conversion of the heart to God ; that which is merely sensual excitement arising from the artistic adjuncts of an imposing ceremonial, is mistaken for spiritual devotion, and probably some members of the family have actually joined the pageant that has thus captivated their imagination.

This kind of result from our intercourse with Rome is by no means uncommon ; and has been much fostered and encouraged both at home and abroad, and especially at Rome itself, by men bearing the title of Protestant pastors, but who never having penetrated beyond the externals of their office, know of no better pasture for their flocks than the husks of ceremonial observance. Amusing and beguiling those who listen to them, with a quaint and pedantic literature of illuminated

books and fantastic architecture, they lead them onwards in the fatal course pursued by themselves ; for they too, with moth-like impetuosity, love to flutter round the glaring light of Rome, and become at length inglorious trophies of the success of a system more complete and consistent than their own.

The controversies of the sixteenth century were maintained by men worthy of the name of Protestants ; and the object of their warfare was to deliver souls from the thralldom of Satan under his most specious and powerful form of tyranny, and to bring them into the abiding peace and consolation and liberty of the Gospel. It was carried into the heart of Italy, and many were the instances of men like Celio Curio who, from being themselves subdued by the power of the truth, became its most undaunted champions. Ought not then the substantial triumphs that attended the dissemination of the light of Divine truth even in those days of Roman supremacy, and in face of the Inquisition, to encourage to similar efforts in the present

day, when so many and powerful obstacles are removed? And should it not bind on every Christian man who sets his foot on the soil of Italy, the duty of doing what he can to make known the word of truth. How would it elevate and ennoble the interest and use of foreign travel if it were made the means of presenting the Scriptures, or works embodying the truths of Scripture* to some of our fellow-mortals and fellow-sinners, who might otherwise never know the words of eternal life! It was by means of tracts, derived from the writings of the German Reformers circulated by travellers, and carried from house to house by the merchant-pedlars or colporteurs of the day, that the Reformed principles chiefly made their way in Italy; and it may be regarded as an encouraging fact that the Liberalism of the

* A list of a few tracts of this description will be found at the end of this volume. Having the essential requisite of being translated by men of eminent literary qualifications, they are recommended for distribution or republication in Italy.

present day, in its contest with the reign of superstition and despotism, though in itself not a whit less opposed to the spiritual religion of the Bible, is, nevertheless, universally favourable to the freedom of the press.

The work of the late Dr. M'Crie, on the Reformation in Italy, still remains only a collection of materials for an ampler history of that important epoch, and now that Italy has been fully open to research, extracts from the works of many of the individuals noticed in that interesting volume, might still further enrich the narrative. The patient investigation of that excellent man in his various histories of the times of the Reformation has conferred a lasting benefit on the Church. His chastened spirit would have delighted in the warm and orthodox sentiments that breathe in the "Discourses and Letters of Celio Curio," and that, after so long an interval, are echoed in the postscript of *De sanctis*.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
CELIO SECONDO CURIO.

THE name of Celio Curio is celebrated in the history of the Italian Reformation. He was one of that numerous body of Italians who in the sixteenth century ardently embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and renounced the errors of Rome. The idea of a religious Reformation was widely spread in Italy at that time, and most of the men of talent and learning, who occupied themselves in any way with religion, declared themselves in its favour ; and if it had not been for the horrible cruelties of the Inquisition, the pure light of the Gospel would now be shining in that country.

Celio Secondo Curione, or Curio, for under each of these appellations he was equally

known, was born in Turin in the year 1503, and was the youngest of twenty-three children. He had scarcely attained his ninth year when he was left an orphan, but being allied to many noble families of Piedmont he received a complete education in the University of his country. His father, by his will, had left him a Bible, and the good Celio regarded this book as doubly dear to him on that account. He allowed not a day to pass without spending several hours over its precious pages ; and that Divine Word that giveth understanding to the simple, enlightened his youthful mind and inflamed him with an ardent desire to seek after God. At about twenty years of age he became acquainted with the writings of the Reformers which had recently appeared, and which he obtained by the good offices of Girolamo Negro Fossiano and other Augustine monks of the Convent of Turin, with whom he had formed a close and intimate friendship.

Curio, ardent in his love of truth, and well read in the Scriptures, soon discovered in these writings the truths which the Bible had taught him, but did not know how to

disentangle them from the mass of error in which the Romish Church had enveloped them, and therefore he earnestly desired to see the Reformers and to confer with them. With this view he set out for Germany, in company with Giacomo Cornello, and Francesco Guarino, both of whom afterwards became distinguished ministers of the Reformed Church. They had not got out of Italy before their design was by some means or other known to the Inquisition, and being discovered by the spies of the Cardinal Bishop of Ivrea, in Piedmont, they were arrested and thrown into separate prisons. Curio, after a short time, was liberated, through the intervention of his family ; but the Cardinal had become so charmed with the talents of the youth, that he sought to entice him by putting him into the neighbouring Priorship of St. Benigno.

Curio accepted the offer, as giving him the opportunity of perfecting himself in the sciences ; and entering at once upon his mission amongst the Brothers of the Order, sought by every means to enlighten their minds, and to deliver them from their super-

stition and idolatry ; but seeing that all his efforts were unsuccessful, he was determined, before leaving the brotherhood, to give them a public lesson. One of their days of solemn festival was approaching (1530), on which the relics were to be shown to the people ; and Curio took the box in which the most venerated relics were kept, emptied it of its contents, and put in their place a Bible, with this inscription, " This is the ark of the covenant, which contains the true oracles of God and the true relics of the saints." When the box was opened in the presence of a numerous assembly of the people, the Brethren were filled with astonishment and confusion ; a tumult was made in the church ; Curio was at once suspected of being the author of the deed, and was obliged to make a precipitate flight to Milan.

Curio was there married to a lady belonging to the illustrious family of the Isaici, and dedicated himself entirely to literary instruction ; but neglecting, through the advice of his wife, religious instruction, as not belonging to his department, his employment yielded him little satisfaction. He had, however,

established a great reputation at Milan, and remained there until he was driven away by the disorders of the Spanish troops that then occupied the Milanese territory, when, at the invitation of the Count di Monferrato, he came to Casale, where he remained some time under the protection of the Count.

With the desire of recovering his patrimony, he hazarded a return to his native country, but in Italy heretics were no longer regarded as citizens, and were deprived of natural rights; wherefore, being accused of heresy by his sister and his brother-in-law, he was declared, without either being heard or summoned, to have no longer any right to his paternal inheritance. Defrauded in this manner of his rights, he retired to a village in the provinces of the Duke of Savoy, and lived there for some time unknown, and occupied in the instruction of youth, until one day that he happened to go with various gentlemen of the neighbourhood to hear a Dominican from Turin preach, he heard the monk, in the course of his discourse, draw a horrible picture of the German Reformers, and then, in proof of his allegations, bring

forward some falsified passages from the works of Luther. Able no longer to contain himself, he at the conclusion of the sermon addressed himself to the Dominican Brother, and presenting to him the work of Luther, read from it, in the presence of some of the most respectable of the auditory, the passages he had quoted, and reproached him for his impudent calumnies. Those who were present, indignant at the falsehoods put off upon them by the monk in his sermon, scouted him from the place. The monk, who was not a man to pardon this disgraceful discovery of his fraud, took his revenge by accusing Curio to the Inquisition, and thus we behold him a second time fallen into its net. He was arrested, recognised, and brought back a prisoner into his own country.

The crime of having publicly disgraced a monk, and exposed his falsehoods and calumnies, was great, but besides this there was a renewal of the old charges against him : the meditated journey into Germany, the suspicion of the subtraction of the relics, not sufficiently punished by the loss of all his paternal property, were summarily brought

forward to confirm and aggravate the accusation of heresy. The old friends of his family, that were both numerous and powerful, bestirred themselves to save him, but the Inquisition, fearing that they might succeed, and unwilling to lose the opportunity of giving glory to God by the burning of a heretic that had fallen into their hands, betook themselves to Rome for the purpose of securing his condemnation, and left the accused culprit under the authority of a brother of Cardinal Cibo, who, to prevent any attempt at flight, shut him up in an inner prison and secured his feet in the stocks. In such circumstances all hope of escape seemed impossible, nevertheless Curio ceased not to pray fervently to God ; and that God who forsakes not the prisoner, in a wondrous manner opened a way of escape. The painful position in which he was forced to lie, and the pressure of the iron stocks upon his tender limbs, produced a painful swelling on one of his legs, and on account of this the jailor, moved with compassion, unloosed the right foot for two or three days. Curio profited by this degree of liberty, and by means of his shoe, a piece of

stick, and some rags that he was able to collect together, formed an artificial leg, which he adapted in a masterly manner to his right knee; this done, he begged the jailor to unloose the left foot and confine the right one; and either by his adroit management, or through God's having bewildered the mind of his jailor, the result was that he succeeded in getting the artificial leg placed in the stocks. Finding himself thus at liberty he thanked God and waited for the night, and then carefully destroying his semblance of a leg, cautiously opened the door of the prison and descended from a window into the street and fled to Sale, a remote village in the Milanese territory.

His wonderful escape, and the chain being found unbroken in the prison, and the stocks still closed, gave rise to the conviction that his flight must have been accomplished by the art of magic, and this idea was willingly propagated by the Inquisition, in order to excite greater enmity against him, and to prevent any one from offering an asylum to him as a sorcerer. Curio, on being informed of this, published an account of his adventure

in the form of a dialogue, in which he took occasion publicly to denounce various errors of Popery. Two editions of this book are extant ; the first without date, and the second published at Geneva in 1667.

After remaining for some months in concealment he was employed by his friends in the University of Pavia ; but Rome, who never pardons heretics, especially such as by the promulgation of the pure Word of God unveil her frauds, suffered him not to live in peace, but speedily sent orders to arrest him, and bring him bound to the Holy Inquisition. The Pavians, however, inferring his innocence from his irreproachable conduct, and concluding, from his doctrine, which was that of unadulterated Scripture, that he deserved not such treatment, not only refused to execute the orders of Rome, but, fearing some treacherous proceedings on the part of the Holy Inquisition, had him well guarded all the time that he lived amongst them, which was fully three years, during the whole of which time, a band of students, relieving each other alternately, formed his body guard. The Pope, not bearing to see

his orders remain unexecuted, threatened to excommunicate the Senate, and place the city under an interdict, unless Curio was given up.

Excommunications and interdicts were, in those days, not to be despised, and therefore Curio thought it better to betake himself to a distance, and withdrew, first to Venice, and thence to Ferrara. During his abode in the various countries of Italy, he did not hide the talent that God had committed to him ; but everywhere made known the Gospel ; and God, by his means, wrought many conversions, especially in the Milanese territory.

About this time (1540) a great religious movement took place throughout the whole Peninsula ; the more the rigours of the Inquisition increased, the more Evangelical truth manifested itself. " See," said Gabriello Vallicoli, " how the Gospel, even in Italy, where it is so vilified, triumphs, showing itself ready to reappear in splendour, like the sun from behind a cloud, in spite of all obstacles." " Entire libraries," wrote Melancthon to Prince George of Anholt, " are brought from the late fair into Italy,

notwithstanding the recent edicts against us from the Pope." Curio rejoiced to see this religious movement in Italy, and expressed his feelings in a dialogue, which he wrote to stimulate and encourage his countrymen in a movement which should lead, not only to religious emancipation, but to the civil emancipation of Italy from the tyranny of clergy government. "If the Lord should continue as he has begun," said he,* "to give prosperity and success to the Gospel, the lovely message of reconciliation and grace, we shall see all the world, more than they have yet done from the earliest ages, flock to this asylum, to this sure fortress, to Jesus its Prince, and to the three towers of faith, hope, and charity ; so that with our own eyes, we shall be able to see the kingdom of God of much more ample extent than that which the enemy of mankind, not of his own power, but by the permission of God, has acquired. O, blessed day ! May I live to see this wondrous prospect realized."

But it was not in the purpose of God that the Gospel should yet reign in its purity in

* *Cœlius Secundus de Amplitudine regni Dei.*

Italy. Popes and priests and monks furiously set themselves against the Reformation and the Reformers : they added to the number of places of punishment in which the servants of Jesus Christ might be immured and left to perish. The Inquisition, about this time, took a new and more menacing attitude ; the sovereigns of Italy united themselves with the Pope, and conjointly opposed the movement of Reform, and declared open war against the Reformers. The gibbet and the stake everywhere displayed the means by which they attempted to extinguish the Reformation.

Lucca at this time gave a welcome reception to Curio, persecuted as he was to the death by the Pope. He occupied, in that noble city, the post of Director of the Italian Church, which had been previously filled by Peter Martyr. He was also employed in the University, and maintained a correspondence with all the Italian Reformers who were suffering persecution for their attachment to the Gospel. In 1543, the Pope wrote to the magistrates, reproving them for affording hospitality to a heretic, and ex-

horted them to send him to Rome, to answer the accusations that were preferred against him from various quarters. The magistrates were unwilling to come to an open rupture with the Pope, and equally unwilling to betray the hospitality they had offered to Curio, they therefore, in a private and amicable way, besought him not to compromise them ; and he, on receiving this hint, retired to Ferrara, leaving his family in Lucca. But at Ferrara he was no less exposed to Papal persecution than he had been in Lucca, he therefore, having received good letters of recommendation from the Duchess of Renata, left Italy and took up his residence at Lausanne.

Welcomed with the greatest cordiality by those excellent Swiss, who had sheltered so many of his countrymen from the persecutions of the Pope, he fixed his abode in that hospitable land, and returned secretly into Italy, for the purpose of bringing his family back with him. But with all the precautions he could use, he was not able to conceal himself from the lynx-eyed Inquisition. He was stopping at Pesica, a village

on the confines of Lucca, waiting for his family, when, suddenly, while at table in his own room at the inn, the sheriff, or chief, of the apostolic bailiffs, appeared before him, summoning him, in the name of his Holiness, to surrender himself. Curio, thus taken by surprise, had only time to lift up his eyes to heaven, and ask the succour of the Father of mercies, who never forsakes those who trust in him, and immediately rose up from table to go to prison, and, without being in the least aware of it, went to meet the sheriff with the carving knife in his hand. The chief of the apostolic police, at the sight of the athletic figure of Curio, approaching him thus armed with a great knife, became panic-struck, and withdrew into a corner of the room, while Curio, recognising at once the succour of God, that came to him so opportunely, and availing himself of it with his usual presence of mind, went boldly out, and passing through the midst of the armed bailiffs that were waiting for him in the adjoining room, ran hastily to the stable, and leaping upon his horse, made his escape.*

* Stupani Oratio de Cel. Curione, p. 344.

This happened in 1543, and immediately afterwards the senate of Berne, knowing his extraordinary merits, placed him at the head of the College of Lausanne. But a still wider field soon opened itself to his genius : in 1547 he was called to Basle, to occupy the chair of Roman Eloquence in that University. On that occasion, the degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred upon him, an honour, which, up to that period, had only been conferred on the celebrated Martin Bucer. Distinguished men flocked from all parts of Europe to make the acquaintance of a man so deservedly esteemed ; and admiring more than his learning, his unspotted character, and his love for Jesus Christ and the Gospel, could not conceive how the Pope could persecute to the death, a man so irreprehensible.

In the meanwhile, Curio did not remain idle as to the cause of reform in Italy ; besides his writings in its support, he had formed an Italian Church at Basle, over which he presided, animating it with his example and his zeal. At length, in the year 1555, his life seemed to be drawing to its close ; a violent malady brought him to the verge of

the tomb ; but it was not the will of God yet to deprive the world and his Church of so excellent a man ; he did not die, but was scarcely out of danger when he received accounts of the death of the illustrious Olimpia Morata, a name of honoured celebrity in the annals of noble Italian ladies. She had written to him on the very day of her death.—“ My dearest Father Celio, May God long preserve you for the welfare of his Church ! As to myself, I have no expectation that my life will be prolonged. It is not improbable that this may be the last time that I shall write. I find my strength fail me, the machine is near its dissolution. It only remains for me to breathe out my spirit. . . . My departure may be at any moment. I recommend the Church to you ; my best hope for its welfare is, that it may always remain under your direction. Adieu, excellent Celio ! be not disturbed at the tidings of my death. I know that victory will finally be mine ; I desire to depart and be with Christ.”

The estimation in which Celio was held was extending itself in all directions ; the Emperor Maximilian offered him a chair in

the University of Vienna ; the King of Transylvania, in that of Weissemburg ; and other sovereigns made him similar proposals. The Pope himself, who not long ago had sought to burn him as a heretic, intimidated now by the fame he had acquired, endeavoured, through the Bishop of Terracina, to persuade him to come to Rome, where he promised him ample maintenance and advantageous situations for his children, on the sole condition of his abstaining from manifesting his religious opinions. But Curio was not the man to be seduced by such promises, especially after the fact of John Huss. He refused all these proffers, and remained in Basle until his death, which occurred in the year 1569.

His reputation as a man of letters was of the highest order, as may be seen by reference to Tiraboschi (*Hist. Litt. d'Italié*) and Ginguené. He wrote, also, various religious works, which are now become rare, and took the principal direction of those that in his day issued from the pens of the Italian Reformers ; the greater part, also, of the narratives of the Italian martyrs are due to him. His children were

distinguished by their talents and their piety, and amongst his descendants are various names of deserved celebrity in the Protestant Church, as Buxtorf, Grineo, Frejo, and Werrenfels.

LETTER I.

Celio S. C. To all who love Jesus Christ and His Gospel, brethren in one spirit and love, grace and peace, with all patience from Christ Jesus our Lord.

ALTHOUGH my occupations are great and my strength little, I am constrained, my dear and honoured brethren, by that love which has made me so much a debtor to you all, to think constantly of you. And if I do not write to you more frequently, I know that you prudently consider that neither times, nor places, nor opportunities, always wait upon our good wishes. But now that the Lord has given me this degree of leisure and a safe and faithful messenger, I hasten to write to you this brief exhortation : and to hold converse with you, if not as I could wish, at least as I am able. You see, brethren, upon what ominous, calamitous, and most dangerous times we are fallen, truly like those of the last days of this miserable and corruptible world ! Look

where you will, you see only vanity, deceit, falsehood, hatred, envy, detraction, pride, dissoluteness, injustice, malice, rapine, cruelty, ignorance, broils, impiety, superstition, idolatry, blasphemy: all which are so many chains and powerful windlasses, drawing not only man, but the whole world, to eternal ruin and condemnation. Therefore if we would save ourselves from so great a flood of the wrath of God, it behoves us upon whom heaven smiles more benignantly, and has given us all its treasures in one Christ, to shut ourselves in, as it were, with Noah in the ark, and to obey the preacher of righteousness. Our Noah, Jesus Christ, cries, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" And, again, "*Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*" (Rev. xviii. 4.) This, my brethren, is a time to repent, to amend our lives, to mortify the old man, to leave the world with all its vanities and lusts. This is the time to leave and abandon Egypt and all her false gods, and to follow our great Moses through the midst of the deep waters of the blood-coloured sea, and through the

desert, by which all must pass who would reach the land of promise. This is the time to awake from sleep, to take our arms in our hands, and to fight against the Canaanites and the enemies of God and of ourselves ; that we may enter into the promised peaceful rest, and possess the heavenly land that flows with milk and honey. Nor should we be discouraged by the multitude of the enemy, for much more numerous, though we see them not, are our hosts, and stronger and more valiant than theirs. Be of the same mind with Elisha the prophet of the Lord, against whom the king of Syria sent a great multitude of horses and chariots to take him and bring him away ; and at the sight of which, his frightened servant exclaimed, " Alas, my master, how shall we do ? " And he answered, " Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them ! " The prophet saw them though the servant did not. And Elisha prayed the Lord to open his eyes, and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. This is written to assure us that though we see them not, we

should not the less believe that the heavenly hosts are with us, guided and led by our Captain and Commander Jesus Christ.

There are four qualifications that we look for in a leader, wisdom, power, authority, and success, or the habit of being victorious in war. All these are found in their perfection in our Captain, Jesus Christ the Son of God. He is the power and the wisdom of God, and to him is given all authority and power in heaven and in earth, and so successful is he that he has never engaged in battle without being victorious ; and so conspicuous is this success, that when he appears weakest is the very time of his victory and triumph ; as when on Mount Calvary he vanquished all his enemies, and soon afterwards carried up on high the spoils and trophies of his victory. Oh ! how ought we, brethren, since he has deigned to enrol us in his holy ranks, and to receive us under his divine and successful banner of the cross, to obey in all things this our Leader ! and as he has ever fulfilled and does still fulfil the office of a great and valiant Captain, so ought we to fulfil that of good and faithful soldiers. He is gone and

always goes before us; let us courageously follow him who leads to victory. The soldier ought to be sober, vigilant, brave, and furnished with every needful weapon, and so much the more are these things necessary when the war is a great and dangerous one, and engaged in for so great a cause. Such, indeed, is the greatness of our war, that it ought to excite and inflame our souls, for we have not only to fight "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12), against the wiles of the devil and his servants; whence may be inferred, how great the dangers are to which we are exposed. But the things for which we contend are greater than have been seen, or heard, or conceived of by the men of this world. We fight not for earthly, but for heavenly glory, not for a point of the circle, but for the whole circumference, and all that is comprehended in it; not for frail and fallen goods, but for those which are stable and eternal; not for this sorrowful and mortal life, but for a blessed immortal one. The

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reward of this war is not such and such a city or country, but the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven and of earth together, and the enjoyment with Christ of the fulness of all divine pleasures in the beatific vision and presence of God. Such a reward, so bright a crown is prepared for the conquerors ! But "if a man strive for masteries (says a valiant captain), yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully." (2 Tim. ii. 5.) And who is the man that will not fight courageously, seeing there is so great necessity, so many animating promises, such a reward ; and especially when it is for a Lord and Master so good and generous, so kind and gentle, so wise, so rich, so powerful as we know our King, the Son of God, to be.


Courage ! then, brethren, let us lay aside every fear, every cowardice, everything inconsistent with the honour of our Lord ; and let us pursue that magnanimous enterprise which is already begun, and than which nothing that we could take in hand can be more honourable, more holy, and more divine. We shall be sure of victory if we only furnish ourselves with those arms of which Paul, that

valorous captain, writes (Eph. vi. 14), and which he tells us are given to us of God—"The girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the iron-wrought shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God." Nor let any one say, "I am wearied," for who is he that hath yet resisted unto blood. Let us remember that it is not ease and repose, that it is not soft and delicate amusement that makes men strong and valiant, but exercise and fatigue, hard and severe things, the dust, the camp, and the oft-fought battle. These things are needful for the soldier of this world, and much more for the soldier of Christ. Look unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith ; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. xii. 12), "knowing that though our outward man perish, yet the inward

man is renewed day by day, for our light affliction shall be changed into an eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 16.) "A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." (John xvi. 21.) If ye also have sorrow, your sorrow shall be turned into joy. "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.) "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 4.) Blessed is he that regards not the present but the future, "that looks not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. iv. 18.) The Apostle Peter, whilst he looked to Christ, as the pilot does to the pole-star, safely walked upon the frightful waves of a great lake, but as soon as he took off his eyes from Christ, who is the star of our faith, and turned them upon the threatening tempest, he began to sink. And if the compassionate

Jesus had not been so gracious as to put forth his power to help, he would have perished. Let us not then look at the power, the threatenings, the rage of the adversaries, but at the promises of God, and to our great Moses, and we shall see great things. We shall see the obstinate Pharaoh and all his host, his horses and chariots and weapons, submerged. But above all it behoves us to be watchful and diligent in prayer and in the reading of the holy Scriptures, always praying in the Spirit and searching for the truth in their sacred pages, for these two are the wings of the faithful soul. The reading instructs us and shows us the will of God, and prayer obtains the gift to follow it. The sacred reading presents to us the light of truth; and prayer the comprehension of it. Without these wings, that is, without prayer and the living Word of God, we can neither stand firmly on earth nor mount up to heaven. We are very weak through the flesh, and heavy through sin, and by nature foolish and ignorant; but by the advantage of holy doctrine and fervent prayer the soul is strengthened, its ignorance expelled, and the whole man

becomes so pure and light that he can fly high enough to see the whole world beneath his feet ; so that this impure world, with all its nets and artifices, shall no longer be able to retain him. And if he should think that it has ensnared him, it will fall out as it has often done with the fowler, who fancies that the bird is safely held by the feet or neck with his strong noose or birdlime, when it is only held by a slight feather. And suddenly, while he believes it safe in his hands, leaving the feather attached to the birdlime, or breaking the weak thread of the snare, it flies away where he shall never again have power to take it. In like manner shall we escape to heaven, leaving our earthly and fragile vestments in the hands of the cruel tyrant. And since the Lord has ordained his ministers and dispensers of his holy mysteries, and used men instead of trumpets to awaken and encourage his soldiers to the battle, I could wish that you would choose from amongst yourselves one such choice spirit of holy conversation and sound doctrine who might have the charge of your little flock to guide and feed, and care for it with all tenderness and



love. From him you could hear the Word of God ; all of you who best know yourselves, and whose faith has been already proved by many tokens, thus assembling yourselves together : then some of you, according to opportunity, might go through the houses of the brethren to console the troubled, strengthen the lukewarm, admonish the wandering, and advise the fathers and mothers of families how they ought to govern and instruct their households ; and if, as often happens, there are poor amongst you, who by their honest labour cannot support themselves, help them with what the Church may contribute. For little will avail all the rest if, when you assemble together in the name of Christ, you take not special care of the poor of Christ. The Apostle Paul desired (1 Cor. xvi. 2, 1 Tim. vi.) that not only the rich but even the poor also should give alms, those of the abundance that God had put into their hands to distribute, and the others as labourers and artisans, of that which they had gained during the week beyond their immediate necessities. Examples of this have been left us by our true mother the Primitive Church, and which

we should follow if we would be her true children. But I need not multiply words, for I know, thanks be to God, that you are not slow to understand. You have the holy Scriptures, you have the Holy Spirit, the only true interpreter of them, you have "the anointing which teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie." (1 John i. 27.) Stand firm in the faith, united together in charity, love the Lord Jesus Christ and expect his coming, in all purity, that he may find you ready to enter with him into that heavenly and so longed-for marriage supper of the Lamb. Pray for us, as we likewise do for you continually. Salute one another in holy peace, and read this in the congregation. The brethren that are with me salute you in Christ. The Lord of death and of life himself confirm and strengthen you with his divine power, and fill your hearts with spiritual joy to the praise and glory of his name. Amen.

LETTER II.

S. C. C. to the Brethren which are dispersed through all the kingdom of Babylon, grace and peace, with increase of the Spirit.

You ask me brethren, if I could, with good conscience, and in accordance with the precepts of God, participate in the ceremonies and superstitions of Babylon, being present there only with the body, but absent with the mind, and estranged from all superstition and vain religion ?

In the first place, I answer you, that it appears to me a very difficult and arduous thing to give counsel to persons oppressed with so great a tyranny as you are ; for, on the one hand, your cruel misery moves me to pity, and, on the other, truth lays her obligations on me ; and hence, in my own mind, arises a contrariety and doubtful contrast, to such a degree, that I can hardly resolve which part I ought to take. When I call to mind that I myself, also, have been in the same bondage and anguish, I feel so much for those who are still involved in it,

and find no way of extricating themselves, that the thought embitters my life ; and while such is the case, it is not the less needful to hold such a course, and adopt such a manner, that this, our counsel, may be free from hatred and friendship, from wrath and compassion, and every other affection that may darken the mind, and mislead it from the truth. You will pardon me, then, beloved brethren, if, in giving you counsel, I should appear to say things somewhat harsh, and not altogether grateful to your state of infirmity, and you will persuade yourselves that we, in fact, to the utmost of our power, willingly help you in this, your calamity. To begin, then, by stating some necessary things. All our actions and reasonings ought to be directed to two ends. The first is the glory of Christ, and his righteousness ; the other, the good of the brethren, that is to say, their edification in the Church of Christ. And here I would first observe, if we have truly learned Christ, and believe firmly that he is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption (1 Cor. i. 30) ; if we have laid up all our riches, our treasures, our hopes, in heaven, where He reigns, at the right hand of the

Father, there will be little necessity for these our counsels ; for we shall know that all these earthly things, as father, mother, relations, friends, goods, country, and even life itself, ought to be left and lost, in order to maintain the honour of Christ entire, and his holy religion and majesty. So that, in all things, and by all means, we should keep ourselves from offending, by deeds or words, or bad example, or dissimulation, our brethren for whom Christ died ; but rather, following the footsteps of our Heavenly Master, should we be ready to shed our blood for them. Let this, then, be your first care—to learn well Christ, to be rich in the excellent knowledge of him, and hence will spring firmness of courage and constancy. For if some persecute Christ in his members ; if others, being brought before magistrates, deny Christ ; if others voluntarily dissimulate to hide what knowledge they have of him ; whence can we believe that this can come, but from their not having yet well learned Christ ? They that fight against Christ cannot in any wise know him, as says St. Paul (1 Cor. ii. 8), “ Had they known, they would not have crucified

the Lord of glory." Nor do they yet rightly know him, that either deny him, or feign not to know him ; seeing that if we dissimulate, it is surely a kind of denial : wherefore, if you, brethren, have learnt Christ as you ought, if you are perfectly instructed in his word and doctrine, if you are full of the Spirit of Christ, and clothed with heavenly courage, such things could never happen to you ; but, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (iv. 19), with great boldness and faithfulness you shall speak of Christ, and with great ardour and constancy, forgetting everything else, shall you defend his honour. I could wish that they would tell me a little, they that believe it to be lawful to feign and dissemble in religion, where will be the glory of Christ ; where the well-being and good example to the brethren, with which they endeavour to draw and conduct them to Christ ? But in this I do not see the glory of Christ ; for by keeping silence and dissembling they obscure it, and, inasmuch as in them lies, they bury it. Then in what way do they promote the welfare of the brethren, whose consciences they offend by

such bad examples, confirming them in superstition and idolatry? And know they not even what Christ has said (Matt. x. 32), "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." And as to the brethren,—know they how the Lord has threatened those that put a stumbling-block in the way of even the least of those that believe in him. (Matt. xviii. 6.) Do they know, also, that the Apostle Paul says (2 Cor. viii. 12), "When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ?" Tell me, I pray you, where, in the whole Scriptures, is there to be found any approval of this dissimulation? On the contrary, do they not reprove and blame it? Recall to mind those three holy children of Israel (Daniel iii.) amongst whom this point was mooted in Babylon, and set at rest for ever—I would ask you if they dissembled; or, if they would not rather be burnt alive than ever consent to, or admit such dissimulation? But here, some of

you will say to me, God searches the heart, which if he finds not approving of the impiety (though the body may outwardly, through some necessity, accommodate itself to the superstition), he excuses. I understand you ; but, tell me, I pray you, has not God given you both soul and body ? Has he not, with his precious blood, redeemed and consecrated both the one and the other ? Have you not read that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth (by which is understood all external signs and manifestations, as praise, salutations, genuflexions, offerings, and the like) confession is made unto salvation ?" (Rom. x. 10.) If a married woman were all the day with her paramour, and when she was reprov'd should say to her husband, Do not mind it, for though it be so that I am often with him, it is only with my bodily presence, but with my mind and my heart I am ever with you ; I should like to know if they would accept such an excuse, or if it appears fitting to them that the husband should admit it ? I do not hold any of you to be so devoid of common sense. And do you wish that it should be

valid with regard to our husband, the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom you have pledged your faith to keep pure and blameless your whole spirit and soul and body unto his coming ? (1 Thess. v. 23.) You then that are one, will you divide yourself, and give one part to Christ and the other to Antichrist ? (2 Cor. vi. 15.) What silliness, or rather what impiety, are we guilty of who preach the despising of the world and of death, and praise those who despise them, if we allow ourselves to be overcome with fear, or from any other cause whatever depart from piety and from the allegiance which we have given to God and to Jesus Christ our Lord. What have they done, all those many martyrs of Christ, who by a little dissimulation might have saved their lives ; but for refusing to give any outward sign of approval of the wickedness of the world have been roasted as lambs on a spit. "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword ; they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins ; being destitute, afflicted, tormented ; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. xi. 37, 38) ; all of

whom were fools if, being able to have satisfied God with the heart, they were willing to suffer so much for not accommodating themselves to the will of tyrants. But you will tell me again that for some great good it is permitted sometimes in these external things to dissimulate ; as if there were in the whole world a greater good than true piety and the glory of Christ, than the welfare and edification of our brethren ; or as if you could imagine a greater evil than to obscure the glory of Christ, break faith with God, and offend the little ones of Christ's flock. We ought never to do the least evil that good may come ; nor has God need of our falsehood or dissimulation : and though some cover themselves with the example of Nicodemus and of Joseph of Arimathea, would to God that we might have in our towns and senates many Nicodemuses and Josephs, that the cause of Christ may be more upheld ! For if Nicodemus came by night to the Lord, it does not follow that he denied him by day, and if Joseph were a hidden disciple of Jesus, he was nevertheless a disciple ; nor do we read that he did anything in public that could

grieve his Master ; but we read, on the contrary, that in a time of the greatest danger, when all the apostles had abandoned Christ, both of them openly and by deeds confessed him, and boldly demanded of Pilate the body of Jesus, and together laid it in the tomb. They bring forward also the example of Naaman, the Syrian, whom the Prophet Elisha appears to permit to bow down with his king before the idol. But surely we who are already old in our religious profession ought not to compare ourselves with Naaman, who was then ignorant and inexperienced : he was only at that hour converted to the true God, and hardly introduced into the first principles of that religion. We have been born, and have lived long in the profession of Christianity, and so instructed in it, that we ought for the time to be all masters ; besides which this example teaches us that Naaman was not so stupid as not to perceive that in that act there was sin, and therefore he asked Elisha to pray for him ; for had he not known it to be a sin, would he have done so ? Doubtless he knew his infirmity, and therefore recommended it to the prayers of the prophet. Nor

can it be said that Elisha conceded that he should bow down before the idol, for indeed he could not do it ; for no creature can dispense from the precepts of God, and especially from those which regard his honour. He only said to him, " Go in peace ;" from which words it is only to be inferred that he promised to pray for him that his sin might not be imputed to him, and that God would strengthen him, that for his glory he should not hesitate to despise the honours of the court, which, through his infirmity, he was not yet ready to give up. Nor can there be any doubt that he would not commit a sin in bowing with the king before the idol, since those who saw him do it could not know with what disposition of mind he did it ; so that his example would confirm them in their idolatry, seeing that he gave no public sign or testimony against it. Nor yet is it true, as they affirm, that the apostles might dissemble in matters of religion, and that thereby honour accrued to God. They observed for a time certain things of the ceremonial law, out of charity to their neighbours, and by such means endeavoured to draw the Jews to the

knowledge of Christ, as Paul did when he circumcised Timothy, and purified himself in Jerusalem, and other similar things. But whenever they saw that scandal rather than edification would result, they never bore with it, therefore St. Paul would not suffer Titus to be circumcised, nor St. Peter to dissemble at Antioch, but reproved him in the presence of them all ; and it is evident that St. Peter did not excuse himself, but acknowledged his error and repented ; which would to God they would do whether warned by us or by others, and not the less because they who do such things plead the Word of God in their defence ! But we dissemble in those things, and do that with regard to the worship of God which the Scriptures not only do not permit or command, but which they severely and solemnly reprehend and prohibit. And briefly to allude to a few of the principal—what is the Baptism of the Pope and his priests, (as to the dirty spittle and salt mixed with consecrated oil,) but the mark and brand of the king of Babylon, by which whosoever voluntarily receives it makes himself a soldier of Antichrist, and obliges himself to follow his fatal standard?

What shall we say of the communion of the altar to which at least once in the year the people are obliged to be present, if not that it is the review of the army of Antichrist and the muster-roll of all his subjects? What is the mass but the banner of Antichrist unfurled and lifted up against the Lord Jesus Christ, around which the squadrons of Babylon rally—that great statue of gold set up by Nebuchadnezzar, before which the Babylonians knelt, and from which the true Israelites turned with abhorrence! And as this is a matter of so much importance, let me say a few words more. Where, I pray you, has Christ ever ordained or taught that any one arrayed like a buffoon or stage actor shall turn his back to the people, and his face towards an altar surmounted by a consecrated stone,* and

* It is perhaps not generally known to Protestant readers that there is usually a small stone embedded in the upper surface of the altar, under which is, or ought to be deposited, some portion of the relic of a martyr or saint. Not to dwell on the difficulty of adjusting the supply and demand for the material fulfilment of this regulation, one cannot but be struck with the uniformity with which the Roman Catholic

polished and graven (contrary to the law) with iron tools, and then covered with three cloths, over which is placed one of finer texture, which they denominate "*corporali*," because in it they bury, as it were, the body of Jesus Christ, with lighted candles and other vain devices? Who, I repeat, has ordained that any one performing all these fantastic

Church introduces the intervention and mixture of human with divine things. Even the altar, sanctified as one would suppose in the highest degree by the real presence of the Lord, is not sufficiently sanctified without this addition of human merit.

Just as in her doctrinal view of the person of Christ, on which some Protestants have heedlessly denominated her *orthodox*, she virtually denies that Jesus has come in the flesh by her recourse to the Virgin, and other human intercessors, to supply that lack of sympathy which results from her erroneous view of the precious doctrine of the human nature of Christ; that doctrine by which the humblest believer may ever have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus the alone Mediator and Intercessor. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."—TR.

mummeries, turning first to one side and then to the other, murmuring I know not what incantations, and finally having produced a little round cake of paste, baked and moulded into form between two hot irons, which they call the host, and which together with a richly ornamented chalice, containing a little wine and water, they then lift with both hands above their head, shewing it to the deluded people who stand behind, and adore that round white god which the priest, or it may be his man or maid-servant, has made : and not content with this he then divides it into three parts, one of which he puts into the cup and two he reserves ; till having pacified all heavenly and infernal gods, and having sufficiently played with it, (much in the same way as a cat does with the mouse she has caught,) he then eats it alone, and empties the cup ; the people all the while wondering at these stage tricks, and bearing them ? Oh ! wonderful patience ! or rather, on the other hand, oh ! what blasphemy, and cause of scandal, worthy of a thousand millstones ! And where has Christ ever commanded such things ? Where has he ever taught us to adore a piece of bread ? Where do you read that the Supper of the

Lord is a sacrifice for the living and the dead? Truly may it be said that nothing is so holy but that the audacity and avarice of man may contaminate it. I dare affirm that you will find nothing amongst all the numerous superstitions of Popery, infinite though they be, to be more impious, more treacherous, and by which miserable men are farther alienated from the true worship of God, and by which the Divine Majesty is more deeply offended, and the benefit of the death of Christ more obscured and contemned, than this so-called mass and sacrifice, invented in opposition to the sacrifice of Christ. For by this mock tragedy and stage mummery the true and salutary use and fruit of the Lord's Supper, that lively memorial of the passion and death of Christ, is taken away and annulled, and Christian people are called together only to behold and hear and adore what they neither know nor comprehend. Oh! sad and deplorable calamity! I beseech thee, O Jesus, and with me all those beseech thee who are jealous for thine honour, by thy most holy body which thou hast given for us, by thy most precious blood which thou hast so freely shed for our

sins, that thou wouldest yet deliver thy people from this abominable error and abuse, and from this miserable and awful bondage and tyranny, so that to Thee, the only true deliverer, may everywhere be rendered rightful honour according to thy word, and not according to the dreams and impious inventions of men !

But singing, some one will say, and these organs and ceremonies are in reality good, since they are used in honour of God. I reply, that what is done in honour of God ought to be done by the commandment of God ; and if St. Paul tells us to sing, he enjoins that it be with the heart, and with a heart filled with the Spirit, and not with excess of wine or food (Eph. v. 19), nor from mere custom, without the Spirit. And if David used singing, with instruments of music, they are not to be more admitted under the New Testament than the other ceremonies of that time ; for all that is said in the congregation or church ought to be understood by all, as St. Paul writes to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xiv. 15.) But all that is sung and said and chanted now-a-days in the temples, is no more understood by the people than

they would have been able to understand all those kinds of music that sounded round the statue of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon, except that in like manner, they might infer that they are no other than the harps and drums and flutes and fifes of the court of the King of Babylon, and the pageant of the great whore clothed in purple and scarlet. I might here speak also of the worship of images and idols, and the invocation of dead saints, if I did not know that you are well aware that this is the open war that is waged against God, and his Son Jesus Christ. I might also say something respecting funeral obsequies, and the prayers for the dead, as carried on in the kingdom of Antichrist, if you did not see that this is nothing else than miserably to fall in the battle, to compound with devils and with the dead, to deny Christ and his promises, and finally to be buried in hell, with the wicked and the infidel. Unhappy for us, if we see not these things ; more unhappy still if we see them, and yet think we may dissimulate under them ; but most of all unhappy if we are willing to approve and defend them !

If, then, brethren, you to whom we have written these things will well reflect upon, and consider them, you shall know how you ought to conduct yourselves, and to what end all our actions ought to be directed ; for he must needs err who has not, in all his designs and intentions and conduct a certain and fixed object, at which he is constantly aiming. Now, the things which the Christian ought ever to have in his mind's eye, are, as we have already said, first, the glory of Christ, and then, that which is its inseparable companion, the salvation and edification of the brethren. And these things we are bound, by every means to accomplish and maintain, if we would not prove traitors to Christ, and rebels against his majesty, whom we have promised to serve, and under whose divine banner we are enrolled. But because some are so feeble, and have so little faith and knowledge of God, that they dare not openly discountenance those impious abuses ; to such, I recommend that they remain quiet, and that, like Nicodemus (for here the example is applicable), they go to Jesus by night ; that they discourse of what they actually believe ;

that they learn at home ; that they read the holy Scriptures ; that they pray, and hear the Word of the Gospel with great desire to grow in the knowledge of Christ, that they may not be always children. Let them continually pray to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to increase their faith, to inflame their love, to confirm their hope, that they may become perfect men, as they ought to be, and disciples of Christ ; and moreover, if human frailty, if fear, or any other motive, mislead them from their purpose, and draw them into any kind of superstition or idolatry, (which, nevertheless, they ought to fly from as the plague and enemy of their soul,) let them be careful not to excuse themselves for it in any way ; but accuse and condemn themselves in the sight of God, and of the holy brethren ; let them deplore their bondage, and ask pardon for it from God, and commit themselves to him, with all their heart, praying, that if expedient, he would give them grace to be able, courageously to suffer all hardships for his name ; or, that if it did not seem meet to Him to give them so excellent a gift, and such a fruit of faith, (a

grace which heaven largely distributes but to few,) he would show to them the way and the means of escaping from such bondage and tyranny, and of going into a place where they might freely and safely serve and honour him. Nor let them for a moment think that our gracious heavenly Father will not, according to his promise, hear them, or that he will leave them to be tried and afflicted beyond their strength, but, on the contrary, he will fulfil the desires of his people, and those that thirst after righteousness he will satisfy, and to those that mourn he will send the Comforter.

This is what, at present, my dear brethren, God has given us for your strengthening and consolation,—in which brief discourse, I have not attempted to answer all the objections which the flesh and human prudence would devise, because there would be no end to such discussions, nor any satisfaction in them. I am therefore content to have touched upon the principal points, which I have thought ought to satisfy those who piously seek the way of Christ, to profit therein. May God, the Father of all consolation, have pity upon us, and overthrow Satan, and cast down

every power and haughtiness that endeavours to hinder the true and sincere worship of God. Amen. Salute one another in holy peace.

LETTER III.

A LETTER ON THE SACRAMENTS.

From C. S. C. to an Italian Lady, not less Christian and pious, than noble and renowned.

To your question, Honoured Madam, I reply briefly, but so clearly, that no doubt will be left on your mind, if you pray to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, that he may speak, and teach you inwardly, by the Holy Spirit, those things which we shall speak outwardly. Give me then, your attention, while I answer your question.

By Sacraments are generally meant certain ceremonies, ordained by Christ to signify the spiritual things that God works in believers, and members of Christ, his Son. Now the things that God works in us are principally two: one, that regenerates us and purifies and cleanses

to spiritual life ; the other, that feeds us, and rules and sustains to eternal life. The former is signified by the water of Baptism ; the latter by the bread and wine that we eat and drink at the table of the Lord. There are, then, only two Christian sacraments—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

The Sacraments have a twofold relation—to our faith, and to confession ; to faith, because we do not allow our senses, our mind, nor our thoughts, to wander to other things, but keep them all occupied and collected in the consideration of the things signified, and obedient to the service of faith for which they have been ordained. And since man is composed both of soul and body, God speaks to us, and stirs us up to trust in him, and to receive the benefit of redemption and his righteousness, by these three excellent means—by the Holy Spirit, by the word of Christ, and by his sacraments. By the Spirit, to the heart ; by the word, to the ear, and by the sacraments to the other senses, we are moved in obedience to the Spirit and to faith. Not that the elements themselves have such power and virtue, which is altogether of

the Spirit, but because they are ordained to that use by our all-wise Lord and Master.

The Sacraments relate also to confession, because, in the use of them, we confess our pollution and condemnation, and, at the same time, give token and testimony to the brethren, that we are of those that confide in Christ, by whose righteousness we are justified, and have eternal life, he being the head, and we his members.

OF BAPTISM.

But, to descend to particulars, I say that Baptism is given us—first of all, that it may help our faith before God ; and then, because a kind of confession and protestation is made before men, faith looks to the promise and goodness of God, by which, as a compassionate and merciful God, he offers us his Son, to the end that being clothed with him, we may be partakers of all his benefits. Baptism properly represents to us two things—purification, or regeneration, which we have through the blood of Christ ; and the mortifying of our old man and of the flesh, which

we have obtained through his death. The Lord commanded that his people should be baptized for the remission of sins, and St. Paul says that the Church, the spouse of Christ, is sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water, by the word (Eph. v. 26), which means, that believing in the promise of life, which is Christ, we are sanctified and cleansed, not with the water and with the word (but, as he expressly says), with Christ, of which we have a sign, given to us in the being baptized with water. What St. Peter says is also explicit, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit." (1 Pet. i. 22.) He plainly says that our souls are purified by the Spirit. Which a little after he calls, "the incorruptible seed, the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." And Paul, when he tells us that we are baptized into the death of Christ, explains himself—that we are buried into the death of Christ: "that as Christ rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 4.) Wherefore we should not say that the cause and true efficacy of our

purification and regeneration was in the water, but only that in this Sacrament there are shadowed forth and signified to us such gifts : so that in the Sacraments we speak of seizing, obtaining, impressing ourselves with, what we believe to have been already given us by God. It is in this way that it has respect to our confession, because it is a sign by which we openly protest that we are willing to be accounted the people of God through Jesus Christ ; and that with all the faithful we confess one same God and Father, one Christ, and one faith.

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

We now come to the other Sacrament, the Supper of our Lord, which, to what end it was ordained by our Lord the promise attached to it declares, when he says, " This is my body which is given for you. This is my blood that is shed for you." Wherefore this Sacrament testifies to us that the Lord's body was thus once given for us, that he always is and ever will be ours. Then that his blood was in like manner only once shed for us, and shall ever be ours. The signs of this are, the bread and the wine, which signify the true

communion and participation in his body and blood, but in a spiritual manner : and this is effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit with our spirit (not with our teeth and stomach) ; and satisfied with this, the faithful soul seeks not for the presence of the body, as shut up or circumscribed under or within the bread, nor of the blood in the cup : but desires his Lord free and loosed, and no longer bound to the elements of this world. For though Christ be in heaven, or, as St. Paul says, above all heavens, nevertheless, no interval nor distance of place can separate the Head from his body, so that he cannot minister to them his power, and that every member may not be nourished and sustained by him. Of this he gives us so certain and clear a sign in the Supper that we partake of in remembrance of him, that without any doubt we are to believe Christ with all his riches and treasures to be given to us, not otherwise than if he were himself present before our eyes and could be touched and handled by us : and this with so much power and efficacy as not only to give the hope of eternal life to our souls, but also to secure to us the immortality of the body, which is already vivified by his immor-

tal body. Therefore, by the bread and wine is represented to us the body and the blood, so that we may know them not only to be ours, but to be to us life and nourishment.

So that when we see the bread and wine ordained to signify the body and blood of Christ, we ought at once to draw this inference : if I believe my senses, that tell me this is bread, this is wine—as they are in truth,—ought I not much more to believe the words of Christ, who tells me that he gives me his body and blood, with which he feeds and sustains me, and maintains in me spiritual life ; as with bread and wine and other food he sustains my bodily and natural life. Bread feeds and nourishes ; wine cheers and warms ; and so in like manner does the body of Christ crucified and wounded for us, and his blood poured forth, nourish and comfort the faithful soul. This Sacrament being therefore a testimony of such liberality on the part of God towards us, ought to remind us that we should not be unmindful of so great a benefit, but extol it with due praise and thanksgiving ; so that as members of the same body, we should stand united and fixed and rooted in one common

and mutual love. For no greater stimulus than this could possibly be given to us to excite and inflame the love of our hearts, seeing that Christ not only gave himself to us as an example that we should give and dedicate ourselves one to another reciprocally, but made himself common to us all, that we again might all form one same body in him. But since some continue so obstinately to blind their eyes on this subject, I would earnestly address myself further to them and say, 'Place yourselves in the presence of Jesus Christ at his first institution and ordination of this mystery,' for we may thus mentally transport ourselves for a little before him. Christ takes with his hand bread that was upon the table; Christ presents this same bread to his disciples; Christ, while he presents to them the bread, speaks to them. Tell me, I pray you, while the disciples eat this bread, while they masticate it with their teeth, while they swallow it into the stomach, where was Christ? Was he not at the table? Did not the apostles see him before their eyes? Did not they hear him most lovingly converse with them and admonish them? Now, while these

things were thus transacting, where was the body, the very person, of Christ? If between the teeth of the disciples, how could they see him with their eyes, or hear him with their ears? If he was between their teeth, then it follows that he was not where they saw him locally and corporeally to be: but if he was where they saw him, then it equally follows that he was not between their teeth or in their stomach. Wherefore, in whichever of the two you decide that he was, it necessarily follows that he was not in the other. But here, you may say to me that he was in both places; before the eyes of the disciples and in their mouth or stomach. And I reply to you, that if it be thus, you must acknowledge one of these three things: either that Christ had two bodies, or that there were two Christs; or that it was a phantom and illusion that they saw, and not the true Christ; and that thus the apostles were deceived, believing that they saw that which they did not really see. Which things are so stupid and impious and contrary to the nature of Christ, that it is painful even to state them.

But here you will say, the words of Christ

are clear. "*This is my body.*" I confess that they are clear in the sense that the mysteries and secret things of God are : in which the things subjected to the senses truly signify and represent those which are comprehended by the mind and by religious faith. I admit that Christ gave his body, and that the apostles took it, not in a natural, but in a supernatural and divine and heavenly way. And here some one will say to me, "Do you deny that the bread is the body of Christ?" No, I do not deny it ; but I confess that the bread is the body of Christ, not by any mutation of the natural substance, but according to the true signification and nature of mysteries in the way that I have just stated. Nor yet does Christ himself mean to show any change of their nature by his words, for he said, "*This is my body,*" and did not say that the bread was changed into his body and flesh and bones and muscles, for he, the speaker, was standing and moving before the eyes of those who sat at table, and who would never have believed it to be mere enchantment. Here I seem to hear you say that this is a miraculous transformation in which the accidents

and the form, that is to say, all that can be appreciated by the bodily senses, remain ; but that the substance and nature of the bread is changed into flesh, that is, into the body of Christ. You call it a miracle that is beyond our senses and our reason and the common course of nature. But you must prove that it is so. Now, in order to prove it, it behoves us to consider the nature and property of miracles as recorded in the holy Scriptures. We will take two, one in the Old and one in the New Testament, for all the others are in the same condition. We read in Exodus that the rod of Moses changed into a serpent. Here I would wish you to tell me if the accidents of the rod remained, so that it appeared to the eye a rod whilst it was in reality a serpent. No one could assert this, for both Moses and Pharaoh and all the bystanders judged it to be a true serpent. Whereupon neither the accidents nor the substance remained, but all was changed into a real serpent, so that that serpent visibly devoured the serpents of the magicians. It did not appear one thing while it was another ; but was in truth what it appeared to be, a rod

when it appeared to be a rod, and a serpent when it appeared to be a serpent. Nor is it even stated otherwise of any other miracle of the Old Testament. But let us come to the New, in which I read that Christ being at a certain wedding, and the wine failing, he made them fill some jars with water, which water he willed should become wine, and immediately was the nature of that water, with all its accidents and appearances, changed into wine, and so truly wine that the master of the feast, having drunk of it, said that this was better wine than that which they had yet drunk of at the wedding, though they were now at the desert and the repast well-nigh finished. Now it is evident that that wine did not outwardly appear to the judgment of the senses water, and was wine, but resembled pure wine, and was in fact wine; just as the waters of Egypt, which Moses once struck with his rod, were blood both in resemblance and in reality. And such as are these miracles, such are all the others, both of the one Testament and the other; nor is it ever found that one thing showed itself for another, for if it were so they would not be

miracles, nor would there be any change. What kind of miracle would it be if to the eye, the smell, the taste, the water appeared to be water, and should have had no form or appearance of wine? Certainly he that would have judged it to be anything else than water would be like a foolish philosopher who, seeing snow to be by nature white, should doggedly persist that it was black. Therefore such being the true nature of every miracle, that it always puts into being and into sight that which it promises (if it be a true miracle), and these conditions not being found in this your miracle, but everything quite the contrary, it will be necessary to conclude that it is not a miracle, and that there is nothing there done of a miraculous kind, because all the senses of every man that eats and drinks at that ordinance, perceive and judge that it is true bread and wine without an atom either of flesh or of blood.

But let me add another good and efficacious reason, which is this. In baptism no one says that the water is changed into spirit, or into any other substance, but all affirm that it remains water, the which nevertheless sig-

nifies the Holy Spirit with which we are sanctified. If then this be admitted of the water of Baptism, it is necessary that the same be admitted of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. And if any one should say to me that Christ has not said that of the water which he has said of the bread and wine, I would reply, neither has he in the same manner .said it of the bread and wine. For he said of the cup, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you ; and yet we know that neither the cup nor the blood was the New Testament, but the ordinance and solemn consecration of the New Testament, which is the forgiveness of sins and life eternal.

But let us return to the words which the Scriptures use with regard to this institution, which cannot in any way imply a change of substance. Christ, says the Evangelist, took bread, gave thanks, brake it, gave it to them. Does it not seem as if by this amplification of words he had wished to remove every doubt, or even imagination, that he was then performing a miracle or doing any new thing. What was it, I would ask, that he

took, if not bread? What did he break, if not that bread? What did he give them, if not bread? For he broke that which he took, and what he broke he gave to the disciples. But because they are mysteries that are here spoken of, they necessarily contain things grand and spiritual and divine, and which are taught us by the words and sacred sayings of our Melchisedec priest, the Son of God, when he said, "*This is my body which I give for you. This do in remembrance of me.*" And of the cup with the wine, he said, "*This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*" Or, as St. Matthew writes, "*which he shed for many for the remission of sins.*" And then he calls it fruit of the vine, and says that of that fruit of the vine, that is to say, of that wine, that he will not drink again till he drinks it new with them in the kingdom of his Father. By which words it is more evident than the light of the sun that that which they then drank was wine and not blood.

But what do these words contain? What do they signify? Not certainly anything miraculous as to the things that are seen, but

a certain summary and announcement of our salvation, which we have obtained by the body of Christ nailed to the cross, and by his precious blood there so freely shed for us. As if this great High Priest and ever blessed Sacrifice of the Father should thus reason with his disciples. You, my beloved disciples, clearly see what we are doing. I here on this table take bread and give thanks to the goodness of the Father. I break the bread and give a piece of it to each of you; in like manner I present you the cup, that you may all drink of it. Devoutly take that which I give you, eat and drink. These things, I say, that are thus done you all see and taste, and there cannot be any obscurity about them, for they are subjected to the unerring judgment of your senses. But nevertheless all these would little profit you if you understood not why they are done.

Learn then a brief and clear explanation of this mystery, and of the whole of this ordinance, and (the matter is great and important) let it not rest on the external corporeal senses, but be laid up in the interior of the mind. I, as you see, now give you the

bread and the cup : but if you are truly my disciples, if you believe in me, hope in me, and confide yourselves to me, believe equally (such is my love and kindness towards you) that I give to you this my body, which you see with your own eyes, and likewise my blood, to the end that nourished with this heavenly bread and drink you may not die, but have eternal life. And that you may better understand all this and perceive the immensity of my love to you, I shall soon give this my body to be broken and slain, and this my blood to be shed, and all this for you and for many others, that being by this my voluntary sacrifice brought into peace and reconciliation with the Father, your sins, which deserved death and eternal condemnation, may be pardoned. Therefore, know that what I here make with you, and with all those that shall truly believe in me, is the New Testament, that new covenant or league and friendship so often and by so many prophets predicted and promised : which no longer with blood of beasts, but with my own blood, will soon be confirmed. Wherefore you, with that piety and devotion and

faith which becomes my disciples, shall observe this my institution and ordinance, this mystery and memorial of so great and Divine a benefit, in your churches and congregations, in order that your remembrance of me may be ever new and fresh, and that you may render due thanks to the Father, and inflame your love one towards another by this example which you see in me of laying down my life for you.

This is the clear and simple meaning of the words and of the whole institution, not borrowed from others, nor artificially put together, but arising from the thing itself, and from the nature of Sacraments and of faith. This the most learned and excellent doctors of antiquity, Greek as well as Latin, have said and felt, though many do not wish to understand them : but the coming of the Lord will decide, and will be sooner than his enemies may be willing.

I would now add two words, without which the Sacraments would in no wise profit you, though you were ever so conversant with them, but would rather be improperly called Sacraments, not having in you any significa-

tion : but with which they may bring forth the fruits of eternal life. In the Sacraments two things are needful, the knowledge or true understanding of them and faith. Knowledge comprehends what is offered, faith seizes upon and retains it as its own. Now, of the knowledge we have I think clearly discoursed to you, the faith you will obtain by earnest prayer, from God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON OR DISCOURSE ON JUSTIFICATION,

IN WHICH THE MEANING OF ST. JAMES IS
CLEARLY EXPLAINED.

THEY who oppose the righteousness of faith, not being willing that it of itself should be sufficient unto justification, are accustomed to allege principally the authority of St. James, who appears to affirm that faith without works does not justify. To explain, therefore, this difficulty I will briefly expound the nature of true and false faith, and what St. Paul says of the one and of the other; and in what way faith justifies. I say then that a false faith is that persuasion which a man has of Christ, which is founded entirely on human history, by which he believes in Christ, as he does in the history of Cæsar or Pompey, but does not know Christ after the Spirit, nor the benefits of Christ, and consequently has

no part in Christ, nor partakes of the Spirit of Christ, without which it is impossible either to know or to love God. Whence it follows that the most part of those who have this false faith, live licentiously, confessing Christ with their words, and denying him in their works. And some of them, hearing it said that faith is sufficient for salvation, when they are reproved for their wicked life, are accustomed to defend themselves by saying that faith saves every one. But let them commend faith as they will, their own consciences reprove them with the conviction that their evil life will be punished with eternal torments.

True faith is a persuasion that we have of Christ, made to our souls by the Holy Spirit, which assures us that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man, that he has with his most precious blood made satisfaction for all our sins, and consequently hath freed us from the curse of the law and from eternal death ; by means of whom the eternal Father hath reconciled us to himself ; of enemies hath made us friends and his children, and heirs of eternal life. This faith pacifies the conscience,

mortifies the flesh, crucifies the spirit, and kindles in the heart the love of God and of our neighbour ; and thus restores in us the image of God, which we lost by the disobedience of our first parent. From this brief statement it clearly appears, as we have said, that there are two kinds of faith, one of which we may call a taught faith, and the other an inspired faith. The former, founded merely on the evidence of men and of books : such is the faith of Turks and of false Christians. The latter, founded on the evidence and persuasion of the Holy Spirit : such is the faith of the true Christian. The former may easily deceive a man by persuading him that he believes, but cannot make him really to confide in Christ. The latter not only persuades a man of the truth of the Gospel, but makes him place entire trust for the salvation of his soul in the blood of Christ, and firmly rest upon his being a child of God, and predestinated to eternal life, in and through Christ. The former, as it is produced in the mind of man by the authority of men, is easily overturned and thrown down by the same authority exerted in a contrary direc-

tion, as it often is by the wise men of the world. The latter being wrought in the mind, by Divine power, by the Holy Spirit, easily resists all the attacks of wicked spirits, and all the assaults of human wisdom ; standing ever firm and immoveable, so that neither the authority of men nor the gates of hell can prevail against it. The former believes, against the authority of the Gospel, many false and superstitious things. The latter discerns all those opinions that are irreconcilable with the truth of the Gospel, and refutes them as false and superstitious. The former, because it is a dead faith, makes no increase, but on the contrary, decreases under temptation and trial. The latter, because it is a living faith, always grows and increases, and when most tried makes most increase, as did the faith of the woman of Canaan. The former dwells alone in the imagination, and is a faith entirely human, and barren, and that produces no fruit that can confirm and strengthen itself. The latter dwells in the heart, and is a faith altogether Divine, and is fruitful and productive and brings forth such great and powerful effects that a man endowed with it strengthens

himself by continued living experience, and is so established in it that no created thing can separate him from it. But for the better understanding of this let us suppose an example. Before I knew Flaminius, if any one had told me that he was learned in the holy Scriptures, I should have easily believed it. If there had then come another person of equal or still greater authority, and told me the contrary, I might have easily changed my opinion, because my belief was altogether founded upon the testimony of these men. But if I had then conversed with him familiarly, and known by experience that he perfectly understood the Scriptures, no one could then have persuaded me that he was ignorant with regard to them. In like manner, when a man has known by experience the stupendous power and virtue of true faith, he remains so certified of the truth of the Gospel, that it is not in the power of human words, however powerful, nor of the authority of men, however imposing, to make him change his opinion : so I, receiving the Gospel, that is to say, the good news of forgiveness of sin, feel my conscience pacified,—the desires of

the flesh mortified, without its being my own work or labour : I feel myself loving God and Christ and the things of eternity, and dissatisfied with myself and with the things of the world ; and I feel, in my inmost soul, so great a certainty of my salvation, and of my glorification in and through Christ, that I live in continual spiritual joy : I say, that interiorly I perceive these and other stupendous effects of true faith, and knowing thus the truth of the Gospel, by experience, if an angel should come from heaven, and tell me that the faith preached in the Gospel was not true, I would vehemently exclaim with Paul, "Anathema !" Deservedly, therefore, is true faith likened to a grain of mustard seed, for when sown in the mind, it appears but a little and insignificant thing ; but then, being sown by the Holy Spirit, it increases, and produces fruits so marvellous, that we know by experience that there is nothing in the world more precious or more desirable ; and hence it is said with truth, that the business of the Christian consists, not in knowledge, but in experience. St. Paul, speaking oftentimes, as he does, of this faith, always affirms that it justifies of

itself, as in the 10th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, where, comparing the righteousness of the law with that of the Gospel, he plainly shows that to the righteousness of the law, the works that the law commands are needful ; and that to the righteousness of the Gospel, the faith which the Gospel preaches is itself sufficient. And in the 4th chapter of the same Epistle, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works."

But the doctrine of St. Paul (God be praised) is, in these days, so brought to light, that all who read his Divine epistles, if not blinded by their passions, or by the devil, clearly see that according to this most divine theologian, faith justifies by itself, without any help of works. But let us remark how faith justifies, for by this knowledge is efficaciously confuted the error of those who impugn this holy truth, which is

the foundation of all Christian piety. When it is said that faith justifies, it does not imply that it is the efficient cause of justification ; or that it, by its worth and merit, achieves justification : but it implies that God having punished, in his only-begotten Son, all the sins of the human race, and consequently having made a general pardon to the whole world, this reconciliation and this pardon is enjoyed by all those who believe, who, giving credit to the Gospel which proclaims this most happy news, return to the kingdom of God, from which they were excluded by the sin of the first man, and are happily governed by the Spirit of God. Whilst those who believe not this reconciliation and this pardon, or care not for it, remain in exile under the tyranny of sin and of the devil. Faith, then, is the instrumental cause of justification ; and so faith is said to justify, inasmuch as by it we enjoy the gratuitous remission of sins made by Christ ; inasmuch as by it the righteousness and merits of Christ become ours ; inasmuch as by it we become members of Christ and partakers of the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of sanctification,

and consequently, makes holy those in whom he dwells. If, then, faith justifies us by communicating to us the holiness, the righteousness, and the merits of Christ, how can any one dare to affirm that faith is not sufficient to make us righteous ? As though the righteousness of Christ become ours by faith were not, of itself, sufficient to justify us without the addition of the filthy rags of our works ! As the true flame, though it does not burn by means of light, is, nevertheless, naturally inseparable from it, so that if it did not enlighten it would not be a true flame nor have power to burn ; so in like manner the faith that does not shine with glowing love and with good works is not true faith, nor has it the power of justifying. And the reason is obvious, for by true faith the Spirit of Christ dwells in our hearts, and moves and incites to all those things that characterized him—to humility, to gentleness, to obedience, and to love, which is the height and perfection of Christian and true righteousness.

In this brief discourse, we have stated, first, the difference between true and false faith : secondly, that the doctrine of St. Paul affirms

that true faith justifies by itself : thirdly, that it is necessary that this be true, seeing that faith justifies us, in that by it the righteousness of Christ becomes ours : fourthly, that true faith is inseparable from love, and from the production of good works. These foundations being laid, I remark, that if we would affirm that St. James meant that faith was not of itself sufficient for our justification, we shall be constrained again to affirm that the doctrine of St. James is contrary to that of St. Paul, and that it obscures the glory of Christ, not admitting that his righteousness which becomes ours by faith is sufficient to justify us without the aid of our works. And because it would be impious and absurd to form such a judgment of the doctrine of this holy apostle, we must rightly understand his words ; and in order rightly to understand them, we must consider the intention which he had in this his discourse, which doubtless was this—There were in the primitive Church many false Christians, who of the Christian liberty, which is altogether spiritual, made a liberty of the flesh, and while living licentiously pretended that they should be saved by

their false faith. St. James, therefore, wishing to reprove their hypocrisy said, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works?" By which words he means, that he that is without good works may indeed say that he has true faith, but in reality he has it not; because, as has been said, true faith is inseparable from good works. Then speaking of this their false faith he adds, "Can faith save him?" And that he spoke of false faith is clearly seen by what follows, where he calls it a dead faith, and likens it to the faith of the devils; and shews that true faith makes itself known by works, saying, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." Inferring that true faith, as St. Paul says, works by love, and is fruitful in good works. He then adds, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead. Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" There is no doubt that if we would understand by these words that the oblation of Isaac concurred over and beyond faith to the justification of Abraham, we

should make St. James fall into the inconvenience noted above. And, moreover, it would be necessary to say that he contradicts holy Scripture, and quotes it against himself, where it plainly saith, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." How then can it be true that the oblation of Isaac, which followed many years after, could concur in his justification? Who does not perceive that the effect would have preceded the cause? If then we would avoid these absurdities, we must confess that St. James used the word justification in another sense than that in which St. Paul used it; for according to St. Paul, to be justified would mean to be accepted with God as righteous, in which signification the word is taken in the 51st Psalm and in the 10th chapter of St. Luke. As if the apostle should say, O vain man! who thinkest to save thyself by a barren and idle faith, know that faith without works is not true faith, as a dead man is not actually a man. Tell me, was not Abraham a memorable example of faith? and did not he clearly shew and illustrate the righteousness of his faith by works, offering up in sacrifice,

as far as in him lay, his only son. Scripture celebrates also, the faith of Rahab : and did not she prove her faith by her works, receiving into her house the spies of Joshua, and sending them back in safety with manifest danger of her own life ?

The intention, then, of St. James in these words is to shew that they that have the true faith that justifies, should shew their righteousness by good works and by living righteously. And by his saying, “ You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,” he would intimate, that to any one wishing to acquire the title of righteous, a barren and idle faith is not sufficient ; an operative faith, ready to every good work, is required ; the which, in fine, is the gift of God, and makes us righteous and the children of grace, incorporating us into Jesus Christ our Lord and Head, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

A SERMON OR DISCOURSE
ON PRAYER, BY C. S. C.

PRAYER is a faithful and affectionate reasoning of the soul with God. This definition is founded upon the precepts of the first table of the Divine law ; for prayer being one of the principal parts of the worship of God, is not to be rendered to any other but God himself. This is confirmed by the words of our most gracious Lord and Master, when he replies to the devil in the 4th chapter of St. Matthew, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." He again shews us the same when, in the 6th of St. Matthew, teaching us to pray, he says, "Pray to thy Father ;" and a little after, "After this manner pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven." The Scripture has never commanded us to pray to, and invoke and give thanks to, any other but unto God only almighty, only good and only wise. If, then, we render this worship of prayer to

any other than God, we should not be true worshippers, but false, carnal, and lying. According to the saying of our Lord and Master and Saviour Jesus Christ, "But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

It is then in the first place needful for any one who would piously pray, to be convinced of his own infirmity, and to know that God alone is true and just and good ; and man universally false and vain, and full of evil. And then he must believe that the Holy Spirit is he that helps our infirmities ; for St. Paul testifies, "We know not what we should pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

Of this Spirit God also makes mention by

the mouth of the Prophet Zachariah. "I will pour out," says he, "upon the house of David the Spirit of grace and of supplication." The Spirit of grace is that by which we know God to be pacified towards us, and that we please him ; and thus the grace of justification is first described to us, and then follows the true worship. Because the spirit of prayer is that by which, being already reconciled, we render to God worship and honour ; that is to say, true invocation and thanksgiving, and confession of our own infirmities, and of Divine favours.

There are then two kinds of prayer ; one of which is properly called invocation, and the other thanksgiving ; invocation when we ask something of God, thanksgiving when for benefits received we with thankful hearts bless and praise Him, and declare his infinite goodness in all things. We will speak first of invocation, in which four things ought to be considered. First, the precept of God ; then the promise ; thirdly, faith, or rather confidence of obtaining ; and fourthly, that which is sought and demanded. In the first place we must know that not only hatred and theft

and adultery, and similar transgressions of the second table of the law are sins ; but that it is also sin, and of a more aggravated nature, not to render to God the homage of invocation, not to ask nor hope from him help and succour in dangers and in every trial. And if we even wish to pray and call upon God, immediately we are assailed with a dangerous temptation, that of placing before ourselves our own unworthiness, the littleness and weakness of our faith ; that God hears not sinners ; that he who doubts in the least shall not obtain anything. These false persuasions hinder men from calling upon God, or trusting to be heard by him ; or if by necessity they are driven to ask help they run to others, and invoke others rather than God ; believing that they shall be more easily heard by servants than by the Lord, and shall find more goodness and mercy in the creature than in the Creator of every good, and the eternal and never-failing Fountain of mercy. But falsely and vainly do they think to find mediators more powerful, more kind, and more favourable before God, than his own Son Christ Jesus the Lord, the High Priest, the Advocate, the

only Mediator between God and men. But to this temptation we should oppose the precept of God, and reason thus : I am bound to obey the commandment of God and of my Divine Lord. He commands me that in faith I call upon him alone, and he does not command it in vain ; doubtless he hears those who are obedient to it, and obedience is more pleasing to him than anything else. And if it would not be lawful to excuse ourselves for disobedience to other precepts by reason of our own unworthiness, so in this of calling upon and praying to God we ought only to have regard to the will of our Father and Lord, who because he requires it, and invites us to it with sweet promises, has already made us worthy to have the privilege of stating and asking all our necessities. So in St. Matthew, at chapter 26, our divine Master says, " Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation ;" and in St. Luke, chapter 18, that " men ought always to pray, and not to faint ;" and St. Paul in 1 Thess. 5th chapter, " Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." And

God in the 50th Psalm says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me."

I shall not stop to enumerate the other places of Scripture which, by words and by example, command and incite us to call upon the one God, for they are infinite, and every one may select for himself.

I will, however, speak briefly of the promises that so sweetly draw and invite us to supplicate the paternal bounty, assuring us that our prayers shall not be in vain, and without fruit. Amongst these sweet promises, the first that occurs to me is in Luke xi., where our most gracious Lord says, "Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent ? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children : how much more shall your heavenly

Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

And what think you of that affectionate promise made to us in John xvi., "Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name he will give it you." And in St. Matthew xviii. it is promised to us, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

But perhaps these are only found in the New Testament? Quite the contrary; the Psalms and Prophets are full of them. How often does David say and sing, "They cried to the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord, and he heard them, and delivered them out of all their troubles." And God himself, by the mouth of his prophet, says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee." Great indeed is the goodness of our Lord and Father, who by precepts, and by such large and munificent promises, invites us to holy prayer. If our hearts are not moved and

inflamed by the consideration of such goodness to pray to God, they are colder than ice, and harder than iron and the diamond. Anxious and eager as the soul of man may be to receive, much more ready and desirous is God to give ; for he is the immense and inexhaustible ocean of all good, and is moreover a true and faithful observer of his promises. But as this is more evident than the sun's light, let us pass on to say something of that faith or confidence which it is needful for us to have if we would profitably call upon God. There are two steps of faith by which man should ascend to converse with God. The first is, that he who addresses himself to pray ought to be assured of forgiveness of sins, and of his reconciliation with God, and of the loving kindness of the Father through Jesus Christ, by whose mediation alone, and not by any other thing in heaven or earth, he can please God. One is the mediator, says St. Paul ; one is the reconciler, one the advocate and intercessor between God and us, and that is the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God, by whom we have been brought into the presence of the Father. To this our

Lord himself has testified in St. John xiv., when he said to his disciples, "I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no one cometh unto the Father but by me." And again, "All that ye shall ask the Father in my name I will give it you ;" as if he would say, 'Ye ought not to call upon the Father through trust in any worthiness or excellency of your own or of any other creature, but trusting alone in me, in whom alone the Father is well pleased and satisfied. Come then boldly unto me, all ye that travail and are burdened with various and divers evils, and I will lead you to the Father, where ye shall find true rest for your souls. I am the way, which if any one will not follow he shall never reach the Father. I am the truth, which if any one will not learn he shall remain in error, and never know God. I am the life, which whosoever has not shall be buried in hell.' This is the true and solid consolation in the complaint of our own unworthiness, and the true remedy against distrust, and against the smoke of human presumption, and confidence in any excellence and worthiness of the creature ; when we establish ourselves in the belief that God does

not regard or receive anything that is not by faith laid upon the propitiatory in the holy of holies, Jesus Christ. With this faith, then, every one ought to come to prayer, and firmly to believe that by Christ his sins are remitted, and that being well pleasing to the Father through Christ, his prayers are likewise acceptable by the same mediation.

The other step of faith upon which the Christian ought to ascend in prayer is, that he should be assured of having and obtaining what he asks ; and he should indeed have a special faith applied to his present needs. But because God has required two things of us, one of which is obedience, that is to say, the abrogation of our own will and pleasure ; and the other faith, that is, to believe and hold for certain, that he is willing to hear and help us ; therefore it follows that this faith implies this condition,—if it please God, and if he judges what we ask to be advantageous to us. Thus David prayed (2 Sam. xv.) when he said, “ If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again ; but if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth

good unto him." And the leper said to our Lord, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean ;" and Christ himself, our most perfect example in all things, dreading, as man, the bitterness of the cross, prayed after this manner, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." These examples are given to us that we also may ask with great confidence, for by these exercises faith is strengthened without any detriment to our desire to obey God. Wherefore, as the willingness to obey is not opposed to faith, so the working and impulse of faith under these conditions, does not hinder us from asking particular requests, and expecting the Divine help and succour. Both these affections ought, then, to be exerted and maintained in prayer ; we should renounce our own will and pleasure, and, at the same time, believe in the promise of a God who has promised to hear us.

And here it is necessary to observe, that in praying we should carefully avoid presumptuously wishing to prescribe to God the manner and the time,—asking that our requests should be answered in this or that manner, and within such a time ; for surely the

physician knows much better than the patient how and when he should administer the medicine. It is enough to say, as Martha did—"Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick," or, as St. Paul has well said, "God that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." And if God sometimes appears to us to delay, that should not vex us, nor cause our prayers to be less fervent, even though we have not any indication of his will; for at any rate we shall have one or other of these two things: either he will finally give us what we have asked, as we are taught by the example of the judge and the widow, in the 18th chapter of St. Luke, or, as the apostle writes to the Corinthians, "He will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," and this will serve to increase our strength and fortitude. And when it may not be otherwise, we are at least sure that it pleases God that we should be in the state we are, and that it is the most useful and expedient for us. And in this manner we shall in reality have obtained the end of our request, which was, that the will of God be done. It is certain that if our heavenly Father had judged it useful and

expedient to give us exactly what we asked, he would have given it us. Of this we may be assured from the immeasurable and infinite love that he has shown us in the gift of his Son, with whom whosoever is by faith and love incorporated, is well-pleasing in his sight as is his own Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. But it is very seldom that he does not hear those who pray with sincere and fervent faith, and does not give them the things they ask for, though he may keep them long in suspense—and this not to damp their affections and desires; for we know that in this manner he proves our faith, and deals with us as with our father Abraham, and Sarah his wife, to whom the promised son was not given till both had arrived at extreme old age. To this sure and faithful expectation and hope the Holy Spirit encourages and exhorts us in the twenty-seventh Psalm, “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.” And Isaiah says, “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

It is true that the Holy Spirit does sometimes excite in the hearts of the people of

God, a certain impetuous faith that, like a rapid torrent, knows no obstacle, nor bounds. Such was the prayer of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who, being reproved by the high priest, and charged with drunkenness, said, "I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord." Such also was that of the woman of Samaria, who so earnestly said to Christ, "Give me of this water that I thirst not;" and that of the importunate Canaanite; of the Centurion and others, whose faith was so full and overflowing that in whichsoever direction it was inclined it opened a way to its own wishes. To this ardent faith the Saviour alluded when he said, "Ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you." To these vehement actings of faith no rules can be applied, for they are special gifts which are given at the time, and stirred up by the Holy Spirit whom God has ordained to answer us without delay.

Of the four things considered necessary in prayer we have discussed three—the commandment of God, the promises, and faith; it

remains to say something upon the subjects of our petitions. For prayer ought not to be a vain imagination, or tissue of words without an object or foundation. We have then one or the other of these two things to do, either to ask for something, or to give thanks to God for something that we have already received. Now prayer, being a true and proper worship of God, it is fitting to show in it that God is not, as the Epicureans esteem him, disregarding, but has a particular care and providence for each one of us ; and that he alone is the fountain and author and giver of all things that man has need of in all places, and that he, in fine, is the only deliverer from things hurtful and distressing, and the refuge of the afflicted. Let our first concern then be, that as poor and utterly destitute we appear before our bountiful Lord and Father if we would be partakers of his riches and bounties. Well did Mary, that blessed virgin mother of our Lord say, " He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away." And the Lord says, " Ask, seek, knock," and doubt-

less to the end that we may find and receive something. The blind man said, Give me to see the light ; the woman of Samaria, Give me this water ; and the Centurion, Heal my servant. But here some one will ask me if it is permitted to ask of our heavenly Father earthly and corporeal things. I answer, ' Yes.' And if the Lord has said in one place that the Father will give the Holy Spirit to him that shall ask, he has also said, " That, whatsoever we ask, believing, we shall obtain." Now, in giving us liberty to ask all that we want, it is clear that he has not excluded corporeal things that are necessary for us. But it is not meant here that we may and ought to ask things for the satisfaction of our lusts and cravings, but, as I have said, things needful to the body and the soul, and that are not opposed to the honour of God, nor hurtful to our neighbour. And if it were not allowable to ask for temporal things, why has our Lord, in his heavenly wisdom, taught us to say, " Give us this day our daily bread," that is to say, food by which our present daily life is sustained. Which words have been consi-

dered by the greater part of learned commentators to comprise all corporeal wants, as the spiritual are comprehended in the other parts of that divine prayer. And because some bring forward an objection from the passage in the 6th of St. Matthew, "Take no thought for your life," we need observe that in that place the Lord does not forbid our asking things necessary for our life, but only that anxious and immoderate desire of acquiring and possessing which springs entirely from distrust in the providence of God. And if it be his will that we acknowledge these things as coming from him, he, in like manner, is pleased that we should ask them of him. Sometimes, indeed, he allows us to be destitute of them, and leaves us to fall into need, that our faith may be exercised, and that we may be excited to render to him this worship and honour of prayer. Nor should any one think it an unworthy matter to ask of our heavenly Father the things needful for our present life, since God did not disdain to make himself man, one with us, and to partake of our infirmities ; so that he might have compassion on us, and help us in our time

of need, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Let us therefore bear in mind private and public dangers, and our necessities and wants, both corporeal and spiritual. St. Peter tells us that "our adversary goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour;" and his wiles and devices are manifold and infinite. In the first place he, by innumerable means and artifices, persuades the minds of men into perverse and impious opinions, and keeps their hearts occupied with vain speculations, and oftentimes allures them into strange and sensual appetites and pleasures of this world; and then leads them on to further wickednesses, thefts, murders, perjuries, blasphemies, divisions, seditious and horrible lusts, from which, as from a rock, he precipitates them into various and diverse miseries and calamities. And all this he accomplishes by withdrawing us from our confidence in God, and in this inestimable treasure of the gospel of salvation. We have a strong and powerful and watchful enemy, and we are not only weak, but immeasurably idle and drowsily careless. I stop not to recount our numerous temporal calamities,

accidents, accusations, condemnations, poverty, infirmities, war, exile, death. Against so many and great evils I know not with what arms we can resist but those with which the valorous leaders and wise captains of our Christian army have fought and conquered. And here I propose to you the counsel and exhortation of one of the most valiant and renowned of them, St. Paul. That champion of this spiritual warfare, who, writing to the Ephesians after having shewn them their danger, says, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness : and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God : praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication

for all saints : and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.”

These are the only arms, the only powerful means by which we may conquer such great evils, and amongst them you have heard how often this good champion makes mention of prayer, and you have also seen how he exhorts us to pray for the free and prosperous course of this good news of the holy Gospel. Wherefore, dear brethren, we ought to be much more fervent and earnest in our prayers for our public and common, as well as our private and individual wants, that God would free his Church from errors and scandals. To which the same apostle exhorts us also in his first Epistle to Timothy and second chapter—“ I exhort therefore that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men : for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

I have hitherto been speaking, brethren,

of invocation, or that part of prayer which consists in asking benefits from God : but we should remember that we have also to thank God for his goodness, and for the benefits we receive from him. Many and great are the benefits that we are continually receiving from him ; some of which we acknowledge, but many more are those that we fail to acknowledge. We sometimes think that to be hurtful to us which is, in fact, most profitable ; and therefore St. Paul exhorts us always to thank God for all things, because in every circumstance the goodness and providence of God is displayed. But all these benefits are immeasurably surpassed by the inestimable love and compassion of God in giving to us his only begotten Son, to the end “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” And in giving to us his Son he has with him given us his righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption—himself, and all things, as St. Paul affirms. And because this benefit is so all-important, our Lord Jesus Christ has left us one solemn ceremony in perpetual memory and thankful

acknowledgment of his great love, the holy Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, the communion of his body and his blood ; and therefore with joy of heart and spirit ought we Christians to attend that holy communion in which with lively words and fitting signs our memory of the death of the Lord is refreshed ; to which the prophet David exhorting us, says in Psalm 107, " Let the redeemed of the Lord give thanks, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy." There are many psalms of thanksgiving and rehearsal of the benefits of God which the pious mind contemplating, will see how necessary is this part of prayer which we call thanksgiving : such are Psalms 103 and the four following, and then the 116th and two following. These are Christian exercises useful to excite our faith and inflame our love to God and to our neighbour.

Thus God has given me grace, dear brethren, to show you the ladder of holy prayer, the steps of which are the precept of God, the promises, faith, and our continual necessities and wants. Our necessities impel us, faith

assures us, the promises give us, the precept obliges us and constrains us, with all reverence and humility, to pray to God our benign and heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Advocate, to whom be all honour and glory. Amen.

SERMON, FROM 1 PETER, CHAP. I.

PREACHED AT MALTA, 1848.

BY THE REV. DR. DESANCTIS,

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AT ROME.

ONE of the causes, my dear brethren, of the prevalence of so many errors among those who call themselves Christians, is an overweening attachment to the world. Man, too material to raise up himself to heaven, fixes his regard upon the earth, and carried away with its delusive appearances, forgets that he is in a land of exile, forgets his own blessed country, and habituating himself to earthly things, sets his affections on them, to the exclusion of heavenly things, and thus renders himself displeasing to God, as to where his heart is placed. Then pride, covetousness, wrath, sensuality, and every other kind of disorder, fill him with enmity against God. To deliver

us from this prolific cause of error is the principal scope of Holy Scripture. It places before us in its true light that future happiness to which we ought to direct all our thoughts and all our desires, and shows us what this miserable land of exile truly is, and how we ought, as Christians, to detach ourselves from it. To this sublime object is the exhortation of the apostle Peter addressed to the faithful in chap. i., verses 13, 14, 15, 16 of his first Epistle, the interpretation of which will form the subject of this morning's meditation.

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance : but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy."

You will remember, my brethren, from our former observations on the preceding verses, that the verses now read are only a consequence of the doctrine inculcated by the apostle. You recollect, I doubt not, that we

were treating, in our first discourse, of election “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Then of the doctrine of regeneration (verses 3 and 4) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; regeneration to that “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.” Then of the assurance of this our salvation (verses 5 and 6), “Kept as we are by the power of God through faith,” the end of which is the salvation of our souls: and, lastly, you remember we drew your attention to the greatness of this salvation (verses 10, 11, and 12), and its incomparable desirableness above every other thing.

Now the consequence which the apostle deduces from the preceding doctrines is precisely that of the verses now read. *Wherefore*, which is as much as to say, “by which things,” implying an evident connexion and deduction of consequences from the foregoing doctrine. What then, my brethren, is the grand consequence that the Apostle draws from the verses we have been reading? Let

us follow him in the order of his discourse, and we shall see.

Having the loins of our minds girt. This metaphorical expression is taken from the mode of dress amongst natives of eastern countries, who, wearing long and wide garments, whenever they set out on a journey or addressed themselves to any arduous labour, drew up their flowing garments, that they might not be hindered by them, and confined them by means of a girdle that passed around the loins. So let us in the right application of this sublime metaphor of the apostle, gird up the loins of our mind, and raise our thoughts on high ; for we are on a painful pilgrimage, and our eyes and our thoughts ought ever to be fixed on its issue. Let us gird up the loins of our mind, that we may attend to the great and arduous work of our salvation, a work of which prophets have spoken, and on which angels bend their regards.

But as the girdle of the loins, in the language of Scripture, is frequently associated with sobriety, the apostle would here inculcate by the "loins of the mind," sobriety of

spirit—that sobriety peculiar to the Christian spirit, which seeks not in matters of religion to be wise beyond what is revealed, but to be sober, even in knowledge. Yes, my brethren, let us be content to know in these things what God has deigned to tell us, and never by an intemperate curiosity go beyond the Word of God to seek food for our lust of knowledge. Let the Word of God be our only guide. Vain indeed is the word of man to conduct us to God. Man, in whatever degree or dignity he is placed, is blind when he attempts to walk by himself in the ways of God ; and if the blind lead the blind shall they not, according to the words of our Lord himself, both fall into the ditch? Our sole guide then must be the holy Word of God, the Word of God alone. But our apostle is not satisfied with inculcating upon us sobriety of spirit under the metaphor of girding up the loins of our mind, he proceeds to enjoin sobriety as to the body. *Be sober*: the man who is an enemy to sobriety, though he walks on two legs, differs not from the brute ; the man given up to earthly pleasures is that “natural man” spoken of in 1 Cor. ii. 14,

“who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ;” in his natural and sensual state he places all his enjoyment in earthly things, and literally makes his belly his God (Phil. iii. 19), and the end of that man can only be death, and death eternal. But the apostle speaks not to such ; it is upon those who truly desire to pursue the salvation of their souls that he inculcates sobriety.

“ *Hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*” Do you hear ? do you understand the sublime, the consoling doctrine that is contained in these few words ? Of what grace does the apostle here speak ? Of the grace that shall be brought to the elect at the appearing of Jesus Christ. It is not then of the grace of vocation, of election, or of regeneration that he is speaking, for he addresses himself to the elect, to those (verse 3) who are begotten again to an incorruptible and unfading inheritance reserved in heaven for us ; which is as much as to say that it is of the results of the salvation of our souls that he is here speaking ; and this life eternal, this completion of the salvation of our souls

is *a grace*; and if grace, consequently not merit, therefore we are saved by the Divine compassion alone; so that it is not our good works that save us, but the alone grace and mercy of God. Yes, my brethren, let us gratefully confess this fundamental and most consolatory doctrine of the Gospel, we are saved by grace. For what are our own good works? Can they merit salvation for us? Hear what says the prophet—"Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

But the martyrs at least, you will tell me, will have merited glory from having yielded their lives in the midst of a thousand torments. No, my brethren, they have not merited it, because they were bound, as we are also ourselves, to give up life for the faith of Christ; and he who does that which he is bound to do, has no merit thereby to obtain so great reward as that of eternal salvation, but ought rather (Luke xvii. 10) to account himself an unprofitable servant. Moreover, all the good that we do, we do it by the gift of God (James i. 17), and of ourselves alone we are unable even to pray to God, or to think a good thought. Now if our good

works are not our own, but of God, who works in us both to will and to do, what merit, my brethren, can we claim for that which is not ours? Yes, our salvation, let us never be weary of repeating it, we owe entirely to grace, and this is the fundamental doctrine of our holy religion. Admit, indeed, that man could save himself by his works, and he would be his own redeemer, and Christ no longer the Redeemer of those that are saved.

And then, O my brethren, remember, for I speak to you who like myself have long strayed from the paths of truth under the instructions of an erring Church, remember what horrible blasphemies were there taught us as infallible truth! Ah! let us remember it, that we may ever more deeply acknowledge the goodness of God towards us, and thank him that he has deigned to call us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The free grace of our salvation ought ever to be before our eyes; to this the Apostle Peter exhorts us, in order that we may be encouraged to sustain and overcome the temptations and trials of our faith that it may

please God to send us in this life. This grace he tells us shall be brought to us at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Then, until the appearing of Jesus Christ, the elect will not obtain their salvation? This is not what the apostle teaches ; but that at the blessed coming of Christ he will then solemnly confer upon us the possession of eternal life in the presence of the whole world : when he shall appear, there shall appear with him his elect people, then shall the sons of God be manifested. (Rom. viii. 19.) Yes, my brethren, “now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John iii. 2.) Now if the hope of a corruptible crown made gladiators expose their lives to obtain it, how much more, my beloved, should the certainty of our eternal salvation make us watchful that nothing should for a moment withhold us from the pursuit of it !

Not content with exciting our ardent desires after this blessed appearing, our apostle would likewise direct us how we ought to wait for this manifestation. We should *hope to the*

end ; hope perfectly ; * words full of high and important doctrine ! In the perfection of this hope we shall unite the grace that shall be brought unto us at the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ with the grace of our present salvation. It is of the highest importance to us, brethren, to apprehend well this doctrine of perfect hope. Recollect, I pray you, what I said in explaining the third verse of this chapter, on that *regeneration to a lively hope* : the lively hope, the perfect hope placed upon the double foundation of our regeneration, by which from being children of wrath we are made children of God, and heirs of that grace that shall be brought to us at the appearing of Jesus Christ ; and of the resurrection of Jesus Christ himself, by which he completed the work of our redemption, and has opened the way and given us the right to that blessed inheritance. This hope, therefore, in order to be perfect, must be the fruit of faith. By faith we believe in God, we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the redemption that he hath wrought

* The Italian version follows our marginal reading, "hope perfectly."

for us ; and from this firm belief, hope springs up in our minds, a hope based on the foundation of faith, by which we see the good things promised to us as if we were already in possession of them : knowing by faith the infinite goodness of our God we build our hope upon it, and in no other way would our hope be perfect.

I perceive in the three virtues faith, hope, and love, an emblem of the blessed Trinity. Faith is the source and origin of the others ; the basis of every other virtue. Hope derives its origin directly from faith, and may be said to be generated by it : and faith and hope conjoined produce love ; and these three virtues proceed from God, and return to God, and cannot exist separately without being imperfect. Yes, my beloved brethren, the hope of which St. Peter speaks, is that which has its beginning in faith and its termination in love. How, indeed, would it be possible for us to believe that God has created us, preserved us, loaded us with benefits ; that he has given his Son a victim for us on the cross, that we might be begotten again by his death to that blessed inheritance that shall be

conferred upon us at his appearing ; how, I say, would it be possible to believe such things, without feeling ourselves borne up by the assured hope of possessing that blessed kingdom, which an incarnate God has purchased for us with his precious blood ? And believing and hoping such things, how impossible not to burn with ardent love towards a God that has done and promised and reserved such things for us. Yes, my brethren, if you love not, do not flatter yourselves that you believe ; if you love not, you neither believe nor hope. But if you love, believe, and hope, you shall *possess* that perfect hope of which the apostle speaks.

There is one important consequence of this doctrine that I feel constrained to press on the attention of those among you who have recently come out of the Church of error, and are as yet but imperfectly instructed in the sublime doctrines of the Gospel. He who believes, hopes, and loves, ought necessarily to work, according to the rule of him in whom he believes and hopes, and whom he loves. Faith without works is dead. (James ii. 17.) Works flowing from faith are the sign of the

existence of faith in us : no, I turn again to repeat it—works do not justify us, but they are necessary,—not because God on their account justifies us, but that we may be able by them to know if we truly possess the faith that justifies. Let us not flatter ourselves that we have faith, if we have not hope, if we have not love, if we are not acting according to that which we profess to believe ; this would only be to deceive ourselves. Oh ! no, my beloved, let it not be so with any of us ; but since it has pleased God to draw us out of the darkness and shadow of death in which we were lying, to his holy light, let us believe in him, let us hope in him, let us love him above every other object.

If we would exercise ourselves in this perfect hope, we should keep our eyes fixed on that blessed coming of our Lord. Oh ! how does such a thought comfort us ! O, ye afflicted souls, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh !

But let us follow out the doctrine of our apostle. In the 14th verse, he says, "*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your igno-*

rance." We should be, then, as obedient children. Yes, my friends, let us remember that the first-born among many brethren, Jesus Christ, made himself obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. If we, then, would belong to Christ—if we have faith in him, we ought to be children of obedience. But the apostle calls us "*children*;" and children of whom? Of God, who by Jesus Christ hath regenerated us; and therefore, adds the apostle, we ought no longer to conform ourselves to the lusts of our former ignorance; he speaks to those who, from among both Jews and Gentiles, were converted to Jesus Christ. And there his words especially apply to us, my brethren, who are so lately come out of error, and are called by God into his marvellous light. The lusts of which St. Peter speaks are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and these he calls lusts of the time past, because they were the characteristics of the Gentiles, prior to their embracing Christianity. But he excuses these because they conformed themselves to such things in their ignorance, while they had not yet known

Christ. Yes, my brethren, in Christ is all our wisdom, for he is made unto us wisdom (1 Cor. i. 30); and apart from him all is ignorance. Ah, let us remember it to our wholesome confusion, how we have gone astray, when not sufficiently knowing Christ and the holy Scriptures we have bent our knees before an image, ignorant of the second of the Divine commandments; when we have devoutly adored a morsel of bread which pretended to be Christ, ignorant that he will not be seen on earth again, until his blessed advent in glory; when we forced ourselves to do good works, trusting to save ourselves by them, ignorant of the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ; when—but why should I go on reminding you of such errors? O God, wonderful in thy ways, how ought we to thank thee for having thus taken us from the paths of error!

But it is not enough, according to the apostle, that Christians should have only this negative holiness, that consists in taking away every evil; he would have in us positive holiness. Let us read the 15th and 16th verses:—“*But as he which hath called you*

is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. Hear this, my brethren. We ought to be holy, but wherefore ? Because he that hath called us is holy. But God who hath called us has regenerated us, and thus are we children of God. Surely then ought we to be conformed in likeness to our Father ; “Be ye holy, because I am holy.” O, holy Gospel, how dost thou elevate human nature ! To give to us God as our model of perfection and holiness ! If thou wouldest direct us to be merciful, the type we are called to imitate is God ; but fearing lest our weakness should be terrified by a type so sublime, God in his compassion hath given us his Son clothed in our nature, that he might serve as a model of imitation to us, and that we should not be left in despair to imitate a God that we have not had before our eyes. Let us conclude, then, my brethren, that we ought to be holy because we are the children of a holy God. If not holy, we shall not be children of God. Oh ! great God, and is it possible that we shall not have thee for our Father on account of the want of the holiness which thou re-

quirest in thy children? We acknowledge ourselves indeed unworthy to be such, but we know also that none of us can be such without thy Divine grace. And wilt thou not pour out that grace upon us, O great God! Thou that in thy goodness hast created us, that in thy mercy hast called us to thy faith, do thou, O Lord, increase our faith, so that firmly believing in thee and in thy holy Word, we may perfectly hope in and love thee the only God and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. O thou great God, grant unto us by the merits of Jesus Christ, that in the exercise of faith and hope and love we may conform our life to our faith, and thus possess that holiness that shall fit us to receive the grace of our salvation at the appearing of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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